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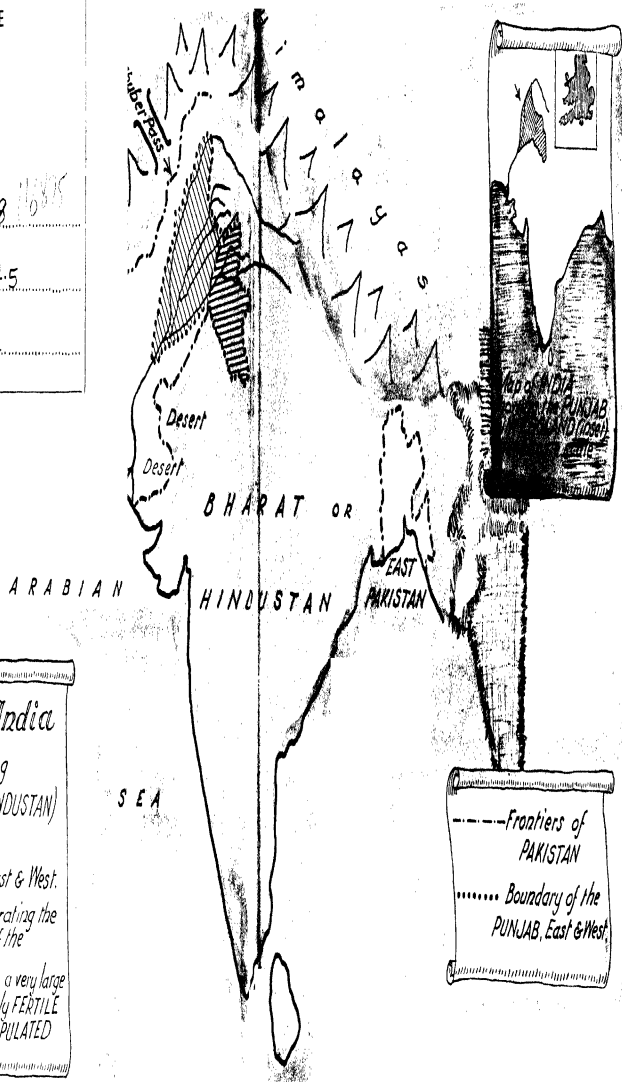
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Map of India
showing
BHARAT (or HINDUSTAN)
and
PAKISTAN, East & West.
and demonstrating the
importance of the
PUNJAB a very large
area, immensely FERTILE
and heavily POPULATED



PUNJAB PRELUDE

NOVELS BY L. F. LOVEDAY PRIOR

THE HORSE OF THE SUN
THESE TIMES OF TRAVAIL
THE VALLEY OF EXILE
TYRANT FEVERS
A LAW UNTO THEMSELVES



A FRONTIER POST — INDIA'S LONG LAND FRONTIER
PAKISTAN'S HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY

PUNJAB PRELUDE

by

L. F. LOVEDAY PRIOR

“Wake up, my brethren, for the morning is at hand.”



LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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NOTICE

*With the exception of a few public personages mentioned
by name, no actual persons are portrayed in this book.
Any resemblances of names will be purely fortuitous.*

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Apart from the photographs marked * which are by courtesy of the Office of the High Commissioner for India, the illustrations are by courtesy of the Office of the High Commissioner for Pakistan.

FORE WORD

THE reader may well wish to know why the writer sets out to write this book, and why she considers herself competent to do so.

This book is purely a description of personal experiences, personal observation and personal opinion. I happened to go out to India to work at an interesting time: the Second World War was just over, and the independence of India was about to be granted. What I saw, from my quite undistinguished level, is probably as relevant or significant as what anyone else saw. And as I immensely enjoyed myself among our not-so-distant relations, the Indians of North-west India, I would like to present them to you, and pass on my pleasure if I can.

As to my competence to undertake the responsibility of putting out this book, and the worth of any opinions I may express, I must confess at once that I have not the authority of long service behind me. But it is perhaps fair to say that I come of one of those families who have, for a hundred years past, sent out members to serve the interests of India. "India" is the one topic I have heard discussed, in every aspect, from my childhood up, by relations and friends. People like these may know relatively little about Britain, but they have behind them years of experience and accumulated information about India. They have, both the dead and the living, dedicated their loyalty, energy and careers to the service of a people not their own, and have served them with sympathy and liking, with faith and hope. This forms an inherited background. In addition to this, there is my Indian childhood, which I remember most vividly—I do not mean the childhood of the gymkhana and children's parties, but the childhood of the hill-country, the temples, the religious festivals, the old forts and the villages, the bathing-ghats, and the country people. India to me is my native land in a sense England can never be.

FOREWORD

I went out in 1945 to a teaching post at Aitchison College, in Lahore, in the Punjab. The post itself and the circumstances of the time made it very easy for me to find Indian friends. It was ten years since I had been in India, and I was deeply struck by the changes that had taken place in the interval. Both the man travelling on business, or dealing with firms in Pakistan and Bharat, and the politician and diplomat, need to know what foreign peoples are like, or costly mistakes may be made. Since every sincere contribution can help build up a whole view, these impressions may have some use.

There are to-day grave reasons why we should become acquainted with that well-known but little publicized Province, the Punjab: the "Land of the Five Rivers", formerly so peaceful and prosperous that it was seldom in the news. To-day it is a centre of explosion. Wide issues, of Commonwealth interest, are here involved. It is in this province that Pakistan and Hindustan (or Bharat, to give the country its own name—for "India" is a parallel term to "Europe", covering a whole sub-continent) stand at daggers drawn. This is all the more peculiar and alarming as both these lands are members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the one thing the British Commonwealth unequivocally rejects is war as a means to settle argument between its own members. For by now it is pretty clear to all of us that there are just two kinds of man, and society, in the world—of civilized man and civilized society, I mean. There is the society that puts the State above the individual, coercion above freedom, theory above truth: when it comes to clash of interests, this sort of State orders out its regiments of ready embattled men and its tanks and its bombers, and endeavours to undermine, surround and destroy its enemy; it has only one guiding idea—what it wants, and what it wants are goods and "boss position". The other sort of society puts the individual above the State: it believes in objective truth and in innocent personal freedom, and expects its individuals to be tempered by a decent inner conscience and a respect for the neighbour: it wants co-operation and not "boss position": and upon a clash of interests, it prefers resort to argument and arbitration and the ascertaining of justice, above a resort to arms. And we of the Commonwealth and of America, together with all our like-

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minded friends, believe in this second, free, co-operative and individual way of life : and indeed it is our way of life, or I would never be free to write this book according to my mind. I would not be free to write it, and the firm of John Murray would not be free to publish it, nor would I have a mind of my own to write it from. What I wrote would have to be in accord with the Party Line. I could not write according to my own conscience, trying to put down bits of things as truly as I could, as an offering for the consideration of other free thinking minds also looking for bits of truth. I would be guided only by a group-conscience, and I would only try to present a view of things calculated to reinforce the accepted canons of the group.

There is no doubt that North-west India is one of the international powder-barrels on the world map of to-day. If it explodes, the whole Middle East will explode with it. If the Middle East explodes first, North-west India will become a vital base. Whichever explodes first, the Middle East or North-west India, Russia will move down under cover of the dust-cloud. For it is to be noted that not only is Russia the head and chief of the un-free type of society, but that the foreign policy of Soviet Russia is identical with the foreign policy of Czarist Russia : that is to say, she seeks for seaboard east and west and south, and she seeks for paramount power over all Asia, and world-dominance. Soviet Russia differs from Czarist Russia only in being much more ruthless and efficient—just as an old horse-roller is surpassed by a modern steamroller.

As regards the British Commonwealth, what are we going to do if two of our members go to war ? Will they both be right ? If one is more in the right and the other more in the wrong, shall we not have to support one and reject the other ? If so, had we not better decide about the rights and wrongs beforehand and make ourselves clear in advance ? Surely we can refuse to make up our minds only at the risk of being two-faced. Is the British Commonwealth a club anyone can enter on their own terms, and brawl in : or does membership involve mutual respect and the acceptance of a code of behaviour ? Of these two latest members, Pakistan and Hindustan (or Bharat), who disagree so violently, and are

FOREWORD

mutually so unacceptable, has either, or has neither, the code and the ideas that belong to the Commonwealth?

These, it seems to me, are the wider issues at stake. And if one wishes to shape or to understand the course of events, one must know the characters of the people. The character of the Punjabi is going, I think, to make further events in the history of our Commonwealth.

CHAPTER I

NORTH FOR THE PUNJAB

NO sooner do you enter India * than you begin to realize it is as various as Europe. India has her Italians and her Danes and her Poles—her Bengalis, her Pathans, her Madrassis—and they speak languages absolutely unrelated and write writings entirely dissimilar. The unity of India has never occurred : only the British, inheriting the work of the Moguls, happened to administer two-thirds of it from a single centre and in a uniform style. The remaining third has always been administered by Indian rulers. India is a great deal less united than Europe.

As soon as you land in India, if your destination lies northward, one word begins to take on more and more importance—the name of a north-western region. People have called it “the barometer of India”, the “key of India”, “the model Province”. The history of India turns on that region : there have been all the key campaigns, there has been the heart of all the many famous empires. The men of this region kindle fear and dismay in the hearts of other Indians east and south. Fierce and jolly, loud-voiced, tall and broad, peaceable and energetic, not astute but no fools, loyal and redoubtable—the rest of India wishes they would stay at home and not roam abroad and disturb the ways of smaller men with smaller virtues and less attractive faults. It begins to be borne in on you that they come from a land as big as England : they farm wealth.

You look at the map, and at once you see what it is. The land is the whole upper river-basin of the Indus, and it is inhabited by those large, bucolic, genial men. The land and the people lie athwart the only land-gate into India, fair and

* Throughout this book I use the term “India” to denote the whole sub-continent—a term properly parallel to the terms Europe, Asia, America, Africa. To the part of India ruled by Hindu Congress, I give either their own chosen name *Bharat*, or the other convenient current name *Hindustan*. Much ambiguity could be avoided if the Press would adopt this proper nomenclature.

NORTH FOR THE PUNJAB

square : impossible mountains to north and west, burning deserts to the south. Anyone invading India by land from the north-west must cross the Punjab. It is indeed a land on its own. It is called the Punj-ab, the Fiver-River Land : its people are a great kindred of tribes, and they are called Punjabis.

The Punjab is of vital political importance. Without the Punjab India is not held. We found that out in the great days when Henry and John Lawrence saved and re-created the Punjab, and John Nicholson preserved it : Pandit Nehru knows it to-day. That is why he tries to encircle the West Punjab by intriguing with Afghanistan, and by taking Kashmir : the East Punjab is in Hindustan, for upon the Partition of India, the Province was divided. Two-thirds of West Pakistan's whole population is concentrated in the Punjab : 20 millions out of 35.5 millions. Nearly two-sevenths of all Pakistan's population is in the Punjab : 20 millions out of 75.6 millions. The area of the West Punjab alone is greater than that of all East Pakistan : 77,000 square miles against 54,000 square miles. (These are recent official figures and I have taken Bahawalpur State with the Punjab.)

Without the West Punjab, there can be no Pakistan : and it is the Punjab as a whole that will save India from following China's example and turning Communist, or that will succumb herself and take India with her.

The Punjab contains the integrity and the stability of India and of Hindustan in India : the Punjab, especially the West Punjab which is the heart of Pakistan, is to India what Britain is to Europe.

She is the key.

Aitchison College in the Punjab, then only part-known to me, was my destination in 1945 : on the train I fell in with my first Punjabi boys.

It was at lunch or dinner on the second day, I think, that I sat down in the restaurant car at a table occupied by three young Indians. They looked to me like north-westerners : they were tall, rather fair—indeed one was as fair as a tanned English boy and pleasantly handsome—definitely rather agreeable and somehow un-foreign.

PUNJABI STUDENTS

Their talk was of Bombay, and they spoke of their spree southwards in the same sort of way that English boys might use in commenting on the ways of Italians and Rome. We fell into general conversation : they were shy at first.

It turned out that they were Punjabi students, on vacation from the University of Lahore. They asked me whether I was rejoining my family.

"No," I replied, "I have come out to work."

"Oh," they said. "Where?"

"At Aitchison College," I said. "Do you know it?"

They all became much interested.

"It's a fine school," said one.

"My cousin is Head Boy," said the fair handsome one.

"Ah," said the third, "we knew you must be a teacher or something of that sort when we saw you on the platform."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because you looked so simple," he replied.

"Dear me!" I said. "Simple! what d'you mean by simple? Not quite right in the head?"

"Oh no," said number one quickly, "not at all! Your dress. No one but a professor would wear such a simple dress."

I gathered that this was a compliment. I disclaimed being a professor, but it is a style often given out of politeness, and some respect, to anyone who teaches, until it is discovered the individual is definitely not a professor.

They told me about Aitchison College. They said they would get me a bicycle if I needed the help—bicycles were then difficult to secure and one of them had a relative in the business. I thanked them, and took this as an expression of polite kindness. Indians are full of such kind offers, but there is an immense gap between the offer and the performance, and unless one is dealing with a proved friend, one is very ill-advised to construe any apparently generous offer as more than "I quite like you", or "Please note that I am behaving civilly". Indians are often sadly cold-hearted towards strangers, becoming friendly only if they stand to get something out of you : such at least was my experience of Indians, and I had no reason to think Punjabis would be any exception to this general rule.

NORTH FOR THE PUNJAB

However, when the waiter came round, these three young men exchanged a hasty whisper, and one of them intercepted my bill and proceeded to pay it. I protested. I could not tell if this were familiarity, or hospitality, or what. But they insisted on paying. So I asked them frankly, "Tell me, why do you pay my bill?" Their answer quite touched my heart. They looked shy again and one said, "It is not often we have the privilege of dining with an English lady."

How times change! When I was a little girl, for any European, male or female, to lunch with Indian youth on equal terms would have been quite impossible. With the best will on both sides, it could not have happened: for the Hindus would never have eaten with the non-caste, nor would they have eaten except with their fingers, nor would the sexes eat together, nor would any intelligent conversation have been achievable, in fact the thing could not have occurred. But those boys were two Hindus and a Moslem, and their English was excellent: they were more like Frenchmen than like anything I had ever met from India. The word "Oriental", with its general connotation, could not apply to them.

I looked at the other Indians in the dining-saloon. It seemed to me that these three young men were the only ones of their breed present. And certainly the whole episode would not have been possible with any of the others there.

"Do you Punjabis travel often?" I asked.

"No," said one, "we stick at home far too much."

"What do you think of other parts of India, and other Indians?" I said.

They exchanged a quick glance and smile of mutual understanding.

"We think they are funny," they said.

"We don't realize," said one, with pride, "what the Punjab is, till we get out of it. We don't think much of ourselves, till we travel and see the others. We are considered stupid. We don't travel enough."

That night it was very cold. It was odd to think how hot the first night had been, and the second merely cool. But this was Northern India, and in Northern India the temperature

FIRST VIEW OF SIKHS

sinks sharply at sundown in winter, and frosts of four or five degrees are common. When I glanced out of my shutters next morning, everything was white with frost.

The train ran quite suddenly into a big station, and pandemonium broke loose. "Pandemonium" is rather a quiet word to apply to any Indian station; the passenger bawls, the coolie bawls, the innumerable vendors of fruit, grain, sweets, water, fruit-drinks, soup, fans and hot fried cakes, all bawl. However, here it was a clear resonant bawl, not the hoarse howling croak of Bombay. But this station expressed its life in a yelling roar that beat even Delhi. Someone banged ferociously on my coupé door. I opened it.

Outside was a solid seething mass of Sikhs. Most Sikhs wear beards and a particular kind of neat turban, often sprigged, and the ladies all wear Punjabi dress in a slightly flamboyant taste: so you know them the minute you see them. They are monotheists, remotely akin to Hindus.

All the men were big: all the women were well-made: both sexes were very fair of skin: all were most remarkably good-looking: all were clean, and most were distinctly prosperous. Every man was roaring and most of the women were vociferating.

I thought this must be Lahore, and I had not nearly packed up my bedding.

"Have you room for a lady?" shouted the huge man who had banged on my door.

"Yes," I said. "Is this Lahore?"

He turned and shouted to somebody.

"Is this Lahore?" I repeated.

He looked at me, and yelled at another person.

"Is this *Lahore*?" I called out to another man.

He turned and bawled at a porter.

"IS THIS LAHORE?" I demanded.

"For a lady," he shouted.

"Yes!" I said. "Is this *LAHORE*?"

"Come," he said to someone, and then went away abruptly.

A woman, very showily dressed—more like a dancing-girl than anyone's wife—was pushed on to the steps of the compartment by three men.

"Lahore?" I said to her, rather hopelessly.

NORTH FOR THE PUNJAB

"Amritsar," she replied, and at that moment her party of men bore her away again.

Amritsar! thank God: not Lahore yet. I had time to pack up.

The original Sikh came back.

"Did the lady come in?" he said, in a subdued roar, peering round, unabashed.

"No," I said. "How long to Lahore?"

"Half an hour," he said rudely, and turned away.

I began to breathe more freely, and rolled up my bedding.

Then I hung out and considered the bellowing mob.

Never had I seen such a collection of handsome looks, prosperity, or rude manners. Everyone was energetically engaged in battle for his own ends. No civility, no co-operation, no consideration, and a pitch of voice that would make a hundred hungry lions feel small.

Amritsar is the holy city of all Sikhs: Sikhs are all Punjabi to the marrow, and the bulk of them are Jats.

Well, I was seeing Sikhs all right. I was also seeing something I was to recognize later: the intense and ruthless energy to which Sikhs rise in the moment of crisis, be it a party, a hockey-match, a battle, or the catching of a train.

Soon after, the train ran into the station of Lahore, the capital of the Punjab.

There I was found by Mr. Chalmers and my future Principal, Mr. C. H. Barry. They removed me out of the appalling din.

"We are rather proud of our station," said Mr. Chalmers as we went through an ambitious but crater-paved booking-hall, "though as you see it isn't finished yet. But of course you aren't a stranger to India!"

(The paving was finished eighteen months later.)

We drove out by green shady roads.

"This end of Lahore is pleasant," said Mr. Barry.

The real city, I inferred, wasn't.

I would like to take a moment to clear out of the way a misconception that rules many European minds—that Indians are a race on their own. The sun (as the historians of Alexander observed) has burned Indians darker than any race save the negro: like Othello and Portia's Prince of Morocco, they wear

THE PUNJABI OUR RELATIVE

“ the burnished livery of the sun ”. But a sunburnt Englishman looks like a Punjabi. A Punjabi may be any colour that an Englishman can be, from a very pale transparent tan to a deep ruddy bronze. A Punjabi with leucoderma—whose skin cannot tan—looks exactly like an Englishman. A blond family in constant sun and heat goes inherently brown in about three generations.

India, like Europe, contains several races of men ; some are very dark, a few tribes even black ; these all live in the centre and south of India. The point I wish to make is this : north-western India is inhabited by a very pure-bred race of the same stock as the North-western Europeans. Much more than this. The Punjab is predominantly inhabited by branches of those tribes other branches of which, moving over to North-west Europe, colonized North Germany, Denmark and Britain.

This is not the place to go into detail, but I will mention the following facts. Northern India, as is well known, is a land of “ Aryan ” culture, speaking an “ Indo-Germanic ” tongue. These Aryans moved into India about 2000 B.C. and the physical stock may still be seen pure-bred in the Brahmans and in Rajput tribes. This is not my point.

The important fact is that from about 150 B.C. to A.D. 300 there was a further great influx of related tribes, who had gone up into Asia from Persia, and now, without having accepted Mongol marriages, came down again, forced out by the desiccation of the Gobi. These were Jat and Saka clans. Later, about A.D. 800, came all the various Pathan incursions, the Pathans being tribally akin both to the older Aryans and the later Sakas, as their tribal names show.

These form the Punjab tribes. They have not settled farther east or south because they cannot stand the heat. They have gone more or less brown, never very dark ; are often as fair, and even, among Pathans, as blond, as North Europeans. (Conversely, you find Americans and South Africans of pure English stock going first sallow and then brownish in two or three generations.) The Punjabis have not changed their height or their features. They have not much changed their temperament or their powers. Their fathers invaded India when our fathers invaded Britain : and those fathers of ours bore the same tribe names.

NORTH FOR THE PUNJAB

It is quite impossible to deal with this ancient history here—but it does explain why the English feel at home in the north-west of India. They are among their own kindred.

When you consider that the Saxons at the invasion of Britain numbered perhaps only a million souls, and the kindred Sakas of India probably not much more, you can see that the relationship may be very close indeed.

A Punjabi may be as closely related to me, or to you, as a Kentish man or a Scot.

CHAPTER 2

PRELIMINARY CANTER

FOR a week Mr. Chalmers very kindly put me up in his house by the Canal. The very word "canal" evokes the Punjab: everything is by, with, to or from a canal. This canal was a large canal, and it was dry.

"Wait till you see it on a summer day when it has water," said Mr. Chalmers, "then it becomes the Lahore Lido."

The Punjabi at large was not long in making his impression on me: indeed a Punjabi in a non-Punjabi crowd stands out like a quarterstaff among walking-sticks.

Here they were to be seen at eight o'clock in the morning streaming in to the city to work, and streaming home about five o'clock: in creaking bullock-carts, in two-wheeled pony-drawn tongas, battling in buses, dawdling, plodding, or striding afoot, and above all, bicycling. In the matter of bicycles, Lahore must surely be a runner-up with Coventry, Cambridge and Oxford. Here, to my astonishment, girls bicycled boldly in all directions, their Punjabi trousers ballooning out and their indispensable shoulder-scarves flying. Moreover, all these bicycles, made though they were for one, nearly always carried two, and generally grown young men at that: but, far from being Herculean cycles, they were nearly all—I will go further and write "invariably" since I never recollect seeing a smart cycle with an Indian on it—in an advanced stage of decay. Indeed no cycle in Indian ownership is without its clank, its grind, its broken saddle, its flapping mudguard, or its buckled wheel. This is for the same reason that tonga-ponies are bony and feeble, buildings in a state of collapse, city balconies tied together with string, and drains blocked. It is an Indian reason, and the sooner the visitor grasps it, the better. Money and effort are never willingly spent on maintenance. You use a thing as it is till it collapses on or under you. Then you get a new one. Indians therefore have the

PRELIMINARY CANTER

delight of a new thing oftener than we do, but they spend the greater part of their lives in squalor.

The Punjabi, if a country-man, was tall, strong, sturdy, tanned a fine clear brown or a splendid russet red, his eyes light brown or hazel, and often blue or grey. His dress was a great turban (if he pushed it off his forehead, you saw the unexposed skin surprisingly fair): a coloured Punjabi shirt, which is really a tunic coming half-way down the thigh and slit six inches up each side: and the big baggy white cotton pantaloons. If he were a Hindu, he might wear a kilted-up dhoti. If he were a Muslim, he might wear the lungi—a straight coloured cloth from waist to ankle. His shoes would turn up at the toes, and probably he would carry them in his hand: but the Punjabi, unlike the Central Indian, is a confirmed wearer of shoes if he can afford them. He and his wife seldom go barefoot, and the feet are not spread or the ankles thickened, but the bones are long and well shaped. From the tie of his turban and the nature of his hair and beard, if he wore the latter, you would know at once not only whether he were Hindu, Sikh, or Muslim, but also what region he came from. The girls all wore the same costume—the coloured or white floating shoulder- or head-scarf, called a *dupatta*, and without which no woman dare be seen: the knee-length tunic (*kamiz*): the baggy white trousers (*salwar*). Muslim women would wear a white cotton *burqa* covering them from head to toe. In the evenings, on formal occasions, upper-class women wear the elegant and beautiful *sari*. This dress is not native to the Punjab, for till the last generation, Muslim women always wore the trouser, and Hindu women the great Indian petticoat or *ghaggra*. There are twelve or fifteen yards of cloth in a *ghaggra*.

If your Punjabi be city-bred, changes at once become apparent. If he is a Hindu, his brown hair, straight or curly, is cut in the European style, and he wears no headgear. The city-man is much more slender than the country-man, but he retains his height. He is of an olive complexion, because he works in the shade. If he is modern and wears European clothes, it becomes very difficult merely on view, to tell a Hindu from a turbanless, short-haired Muslim, and they cannot in fact tell one another apart. If your man is that rare thing,

PUNJABI ADDICTION TO WATER

a "shaven Sikh", i.e. one who does not retain the regulation long hair and beard, you can't tell him either : though there is a certain fair, tall, aquiline type that is always Muslim, and a prevalent fair, tall hawkish type that is always a Sikh, and there are several other types that are always Hindu—these types being established, I suppose, by the Indian habit of seeking marriages within specified circles. The townsman is much sharper-witted than the country-man : he is a malicious goat to the countryman's patient ox. He has twice the farmer's wits, and not half his decent honesty.

And Mr. Chalmers was quite right about the Lahore Lido. For when the hot weather arrived, masses of the population moved off to the canal on the days when water came, and boys and men all bathed and swam with the utmost unconcern : there must be even more bathing-shorts than bicycles in Lahore. Of course the girls never swam : but sisters and wives sat and watched on the banks, and in the evening there were family mango-parties. And the average Punjabi stripped for the water—whether by the canal in Lahore or by any of the Five Rivers—is as pleasing a sight as you could wish to see, with his clean-cut body and his pleasant pale brown. And if he has a horse or a buffalo or a bullock bathing with him, they all fool about together in the turbid tearing water.

Indeed the Punjabi is an addict of water. We think of India as a hot and dirty land inhabited by hot dark dirty people ; but this is a little wide of the mark. The Punjabi at any rate is never dark and often as fair as a European, and if from the hills or a Pathan, may be as fair as an Englishman. The educated classes are scrupulously clean in person and in dress—far cleaner than most Europeans : the labourers, though they may end the day dirty, in person start it as clean as their betters ; but it must be admitted that the clothes of these latter are sweated into day after day, till it is convenient to wash them. Educated Indians rise before dawn and bathe by pouring cold water down themselves, which all runs away by a hole in the bathroom wall : our habit of sitting in our bathwater strikes them as extremely unclean. While if you are astir early in a village with a fountain, a pool, or a canal, you will see all the men turn out and strip down, standing in their loincloths and unconcernedly changing into dry. The women do not generally

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bathe in public. One must, however, admit that the Muslim is much less fastidious than the Hindu : indeed in the kindred state of Baluchistan it is considered almost undignified to be or appear clean, a matter which eye and nose certify to you at long range. But Baluchistan is a very dry land : water is most rare : they have made a virtue of necessity.

The Punjabi character and characteristics betrayed themselves before I could understand a word of what I heard—but of course in the city Indians talk a great deal of very good English. The first thing that strikes you is the loud voice : but here it is not a bad-tempered yell as in Bombay, it is simply extremely loud, and jolly rather than not. The speech is fast, but the intonation has not the curious hammer-and-lilt of farther east : it is spoken much more as Persian is, that is to say, it is naturally Western rather than Indian, and in consequence, when English is spoken, it has not the comic staccato character which one cannot describe, though it is often unkindly imitated by us.

Now as soon as two or three Punjabis gather together, you may be sure that a great colloquing will start. How they talk ! They talk like torrents, each as eager as a boy, they talk all together, their voices rise, their laughs ring out, suddenly it is a fierce argument, their voices roar, you make sure one is going to hit the other on the head, strangers stop and join in, everybody roars, it's going to be a free fight—no, it isn't, it's all turned into some general joke, magnificent teeth flash in the most whole-hearted of smiles and laughter, and the party breaks up.

And the girls, though softer-spoken and fairer-skinned, seem to be proper partners for the men ; tall, well made, cheerful, with long, swinging, tasselled pigtailed and a good deal to say for themselves, but having withal a charming maidenliness long lost over here. Punjabi men are very proud of Punjabi girls. Of course most Punjabi girls are more or less secluded, the Muslim girls being the most retarded by the stultifying institution of purdah : the Hindus and Sikhs do not really believe in female seclusion and their women are coming out fast : Muslim women, being as a rule rigorously secluded, are the hardest to get at and the most backward. But when the girls are out, they are out in a sense no other Indians are,

PUNJABI CHARACTER

except the Parsis. They ride bicycles, as I have said : they go about alone in tongas : they play tennis : they go to parties : they dance : they go to cafés : they go picnicking : they talk sense and are full of fun. I suppose this is not surprising, for little Punjabi girls whether of a backward or an advanced family are regular tomboys. Their mothers often entertain and they do not marry their daughters till increasingly late in life—eighteen, twenty, twenty-two. Even in a case of the old-fashioned marriage, at sixteen, of a secluded girl, she is generally given a chance to watch the proposed young man from a screened verandah or balcony, and seldom is married quite against her wish.

I suppose the chief impression the Punjabi character makes at first impact is the impression of energy, with good humour and a rather high temper not very far behind. Another impression is almost immediately gained, and that is of a certain quick warm-heartedness. Greetings are sincerely warm : men seem really pleased to meet, and boys and youths are very sentimental. The women and girls are equally open-hearted, genial and sentimental. How deep it all goes I don't know : but one likes the look of it. To judge by the relations of individuals in the family, warm-heartedness is indeed the real character and whole nature of the Punjabi.

Lastly one may add, that though mean swindling is not perhaps much in the character, there is a general atmosphere of " I stake my claim and you keep off ", and " what I have I hold ". Corruption is an obvious and general failing. The Hindus pile up money, but often give freely to charities they trust. The Muslims are less charitable, but less miserly—wealth to them is a passing condition, to be enjoyed while it lasts, but not to be grubbed for. The Hindus are bankers and breeders of money by nature, the Muslims so much regard usury as a sin, that the majority (I believe) will not touch but give away the increment of, for example, War Loan or village bank savings and the Sikhs are *par excellence* contractors and manufacturers and practical undertaking businessmen on a big scale. On the whole, the Punjabi, whether of town or country—very unlike other Indians—is a pretty free spender, and likes a good life, and keeps his money circulating. Being also, when he sees the necessity of it, a hard worker, and

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possessed of stamina, he and his family therefore live pretty comfortably, and the general standard of living in the Punjab town and village is computed (by statisticians and such-like hard-headed people) to be above that of Spain, or Southern Italy, or the farther parts of Eastern Europe.

Which may not be saying much : but how seldom we think of India in terms of Europe at all !

Perhaps I may end this chapter with two true tales, which are quite ordinary Punjab tales, and might have happened equally well to me, had I been a man entering the Civil Service : they were told me in a letter by Mr. Chalmers, " a very early—and rather gruesome—experience in my service in India," says he. " As a young Assistant Commissioner at Pindi (a Muslim area) in 1918, it was my duty to attend executions as a magistrate. A Muslim convicted for a murder—and sentence of death confirmed by the High Commissioner—was led out blindfold to the drop singing Allah—O—Akbar (God is great). Before the ' curtain ', he said (in vernacular) : ' I did not commit this murder, but before this, I committed two other murders for which I got my enemies hanged. I am content.' It was 8 a.m. on a cold winter morning, and I really couldn't eat my breakfast afterwards. But I have since learnt that this is a typical viewpoint of the Punjabi peasant especially in the north-west ! "

The date of that tale may be 1918 : but the events of 1947, at Pindi, will suggest to readers that the character has not changed much.

Seeing I was amused by this narrative, Mr. Chalmers, writing again, suggested, " Let me tell you another true tale of the Punjab." (Perhaps I should mention that in the Punjab it is customary to divide land up between surviving sons.) " A landed proprietor, a Jat Sikh, had four sons, and by will disinherited three. They fought the will in the Revenue Courts—with success—but lost in the Civil Courts—up to the Privy Council. By this time thirty years had elapsed, and the disinherited were represented by seventeen males, while the beneficiary had died leaving twenty-one male descendants and numerous females. After the decision of the Privy Council, the disgruntled seventeen took action. One night they system-

A PUNJAB INHERITANCE

atically slaughtered all twenty-one male descendants of the beneficiary, leaving the women and female children (who could not in any case inherit). The assassins slipped over the border into Patiala (a large independent Jat Sikh principality : the district was Ferozpur)—but realizing that twenty-one corpses must lead to police investigations, they left one man behind—an aged greybeard of seventy-five, who sat calmly awaiting the inevitable arrival of the Police, under the village pipal tree. He held a bloodstained axe, and gave himself up, as the murderer of twenty-one males—a noble instance of vicarious sacrifice. The Police weren't so easily taken in, but couldn't for a long time—owing to fear—get any other evidence. Ultimately, they did put up for trial the greybeard and some at least of the murderers. As Sessions Judge I convicted all. But owing to the technicalities of our law of evidence, the latter all escaped in the High Court and the greybeard alone (who admitted his guilt—but I don't think had any hand in it) was duly executed. With joy elate the acquitted (and others)—being the only remaining heirs-at-law—entered into their inheritance.”

Comment is difficult.

CHAPTER 3

BOYS AND OTHER MATTERS

SO far as I was concerned, the chief event of the next few days was my introduction to the scene and victims of my future labours. These lads are worth attention : for in ten years many of them will be leading public men.

This was called a College, but it was really on the model of a boys' public school. It had been started for the sons of Punjab chiefs—men who in England would be gentleman-farmers, squires and major landowners : such men in the Punjab being of feudal or other hereditary type—descendants of Mogul or Sikh generals, all bravos of one sort or another, and, in their original state, characterized by violence, ignorance, self-indulgence, greed, a certain bonhomous hospitality, and no idea whatsoever of improving their lands or doing well by their peasantry beyond keeping the families in a condition fit to plough and produce fighting followers. The Punjab landholder, however, has his share of Punjabi geniality, the peasant both his share of this and of Punjabi sturdy mulishness : and large tracts of the land are held by clans which exercise a lively restraining influence on the clan-chieftains. The idea of Aitchison College, and the later-founded but kindred girls' school, Queen Mary's College, was to train the boys to be enlightened and socially responsible landowners and their future mates to be cultured active-minded housewives.

Begun in the last century, Aitchison opened with a score or so of youths, each with his own cook and staff of servants, his horses and apartments—everything in fact except his wife and babies. Discipline was very slight. Instruction was necessarily elementary. The staff was chiefly English, and consisted of half a dozen enthusiastic and hopeful men. The plan was not so much to impart knowledge, as to introduce into the minds of the boys a few of those well-tried ideas of social responsibility which make for a smooth-running society.

An uphill task : for those lads came from homes which were entirely illiterate, animated by the desire for an easy

PUNJAB QUALITIES

life and regulated by the rules of shibboleth religions : their standards of sanitation, hygiene, manners at meals, not above those of a pack of foxhounds : and all knowing of no amusements or interests in life but luxury and profligacy. Such unregenerate homes, and the women in them, I later met, and will later describe.

Yet somehow—as the men who founded Aitchison saw—in that welter of filth and degradation was a race of men who, given half a chance, had by gift of nature distinction of person, breeding, and mind : in the country districts the commissioners and canal-builders were met by men as ignorant as bushmen, as narrow-minded as the starkest Calvinists, dirty as sin, yet possessing a sense of right and wrong and the noble dignity and aspect of the Hebrew Patriarchs. Somewhere in that collapsed society were old traditions of good and decent living. At their simplest, these men were fine : and at their most debauched, greedy and worthless, they were still renegades from a great stock.

So Aitchison College began : with boys and young men who were married, and already fathers, and by nature and nurture collectors of concubines ; who could not eat with one another for religious reasons, and were possessed of few liberal ideas and of a great general ignorance : and of an all-embracing scorn for work and vast aptitude for idleness.

I frequently wonder why we English and our off-shoots are considered a conservative people. It often seems to me that we are the most inveterate revolutionaries in the world. For into whatever field we go while at home or abroad, on whatever pretence, we begin our grouse against the impossible conditions prevailing, we make a wilderness of broken customs and broken gardens, and start rearranging things, and nobody is more surprised than we at what grows out of the grouse-seed we originally sowed.

The grounds of Aitchison College were extensive : it raised all its own wheat, its own vegetables, it had its own herd of stud cattle, it had fine avenues, and the best cricket pitch and the best hockey field in India. The compound housed upwards of a thousand people. Scattered among its trees were the various grades of private houses : well in the middle was the

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old School Building, executed in the Indian style, consisting of a fine central hall with class-rooms opening off it. This was used for call-over and housed the two senior classes. The bulk of the teaching was done in the new and excellently modern block. Also in the Indian style, but arranged to contain dormitories and sets of study-bedrooms, were three boarding houses, each built round three sides of a square. Behind were servants' quarters, stables, the school shops, the swimming bath. The building establishment was completed by a place of worship for each community—the Gurdwara for Sikhs, the Temple for Hindus, the Mosque for Muslims.

The chief appearance of the place was green. Green avenues, thickets of bushes and hedges, green grass, banks of flowers in their season, crops in theirs. The grass, I was told, never went brown—yet India is a land where you expect to see the grass burn and die, and the leaves of trees to burn and fall, and the earth to crack and bake as hard as a brick in the heat.

Indeed, all this part of Lahore was green and heavy with great trees. No distance off was Government House and its wide gardens, and just across the shady Mall, Lawrence Gardens with lovely lawns and rare trees and mounds and dingles deep in herbage and flowers, its turf paths, its rose garden, its tennis lawns—the best in Northern India again—its open-air theatre and tree-grown stage, its zoo. All round were good bungalows in tree-lined roads: and two miles off were the shady cantonments.

Yet sixty years ago, Aitchison College and all this area was one weary expanse of yellow earth, naked earth as dry as a bone, covered with a transient green in a year when enough rain fell—here and there a cluster of skeleton thorn-trees or a lonely cactus-like plant. Earth and dust, dust and earth, seldom even a stone, for the rich and barren soil is over seven feet deep. The minute the gardener or the husbandman takes his eye off the cultivation, the Indian desert is on him again in a single season.

And what is the answer?—that answer which is the answer to the whole of this great garden, this miraculous province: canal water. Regularly, as the Canal Board arranges, this area or that gets its water for so many hours, and every gardener

MY COLLEAGUES

and every farmer arranges his little sluice of wood or stone in the little ditches of his own garden, and garden after garden, lawn after lawn, field after field, becomes a lake. There where you had a cricket-pitch is a broad lake, with the pavilion, the old School Building which looks like an Indian prince's palace, and all the tall trees upside-down in it : down come the kites to paddle and bathe in it, and the lightning-blue kingfishers and the blue jays and even the hideous lurching vultures : your dog rushes about in it : the earth bubbles and drinks it up : at night the stars and the moon are a field beneath your feet, and in hot weather the fireflies dance in myriads above their own reflections, and the frogs all croak, and croak, and croak.

But the earth as dry as a bone, the Indian desert, famine, are only half a season away, waiting like fiery Fafner to swallow up fragile prosperity.

First, before I saw my future pupils, I had the pleasure of meeting my future colleagues. The Principal was an Englishman, and so was the Senior Master of the Higher School Certificate classes : all the rest of the teaching staff, with the exception of myself, were Indians, Hindu, Sikh, or Muslim, to the number of twenty-eight. All were men, with the exception of one other Indian lady and two who ran the teaching of the baby boys. In addition there were two European house-mistresses.

Three things struck me most forcibly about my colleagues.

Firstly, the extraordinary warm-heartedness with which they greeted one another. Handshakes, the Punjabi embrace (in which men hug one another around the body with both arms, and sometimes lay their faces alongside one another—rather like the French embrace, but never and on no account ending in a kiss—the kiss in India is regarded with the utmost confusion, and that of husband and wife is entirely inadmissible in public) : and the cheerful flashing Punjabi smile. Punjabis have the most magnificent teeth, fully shaped, regular, unblemished, white : the effect of breeding true in stock, and eating large quantities of whole-wheat flour, curds, and brown sugar or honey. Those smiles and that laughter ! who can resist a race that smiles and laughs so easily and so truly from the heart !

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Secondly, the ease of manner and geniality with which these men greeted me. Their appraisal was candid and their kindness genuine. Of course, my predecessor had been much liked, and on the whole, the European ladies on the staff had been a success. All the same, these men behaved to me in a way that made me feel very much welcome and at home.

Thirdly, the Punjabi roar. All the staff gave tongue simultaneously: there were several groups, several pairs of men, all talking together: even when one talked alone for a moment, he still roared. I discovered later that they *can* talk softly. As a multiple roar, it was stunning, and it took me some weeks to get used to conversation in the staff-room. The zoo was about a mile off, and we could often hear the roar of the lions at eleven o'clock. I expect they were really answering the roar of Aitchison Staff.

Next, at call-over a few days later, I made the acquaintance of the Boys. They were all lined up round three sides of the great Hall in the Old Building: the three senior prefects stood in glory in the middle of the hall: other prefects stood round: we faced them from a rostrum. Boys and masters alike all wore European clothes (the masters all had European haircuts). The boys all wore turquoise-blue turbans tied over the *kulla* (a cap like the Norman casque)—except the Sikhs, whose long hair and special tie of turban precluded the *kulla*. Except for the Sikhs, who were obliged by religion always to wear turbans, turbans were worn only on special occasions, and the Muslim and Hindu boys all had short hair.

I looked down the great Hall. The little boys promised bigness, and the big boys were tall and hefty: some were six-footers and some must have weighed up to eleven or twelve stone: they were an uncommonly good-looking lot: there were few of them dark, most of them pale coffee-coloured, many very fair, one or two blond, all of them looked lively though some looked amiable duffers. But my first impression was—beards. In an English public school, growing on the faces of boys, you do not expect to see forests of beards. One of the first boys to catch my eye, since he was a senior prefect, was a huge bushy fellow, with an uncommon resemblance to Henry VIII, and a tough curly beard. Farther down was a

TRUTH ABOUT ABSALOM

youth as tall but slighter, looking like a Christ from the brush of Guido Reni, with a soft curling beard. I gave up feeling surprised by the senior beards and with astonishment began to consider the junior beards. Boys a few inches over five feet, looking to be fifteen or sixteen, sprouting real beards, not fluff, but curling hair. It was incredible. All these boys of course were Sikhs, and their beards were a matter of religion. Beards and beards.

Later I asked a senior Sikh boy how he accounted for it, that Sikh beards actually grow much earlier than the Hindu or Muslim variety : for those other denominations often preserve the cheeks of girls up to eighteen and nineteen.

"I don't know, Miss Prior," replied my young friend (a most engaging youth), "I think it's because we Sikhs think Sikhism and beards all our lives and have done for generations and I suppose it's influenced our beards."

On my first Sunday in the compound, when I happened to go round the boarding-houses on some errand, I made my first observation in the physical aspect of Sikhism. Arriving at the junior house, I found that the place had been invaded, it seemed, by a horde of sweet pretty little girls, who were playing tig and goli-dinda in the dust and on the grass. They turned out to be my junior boys, their hair new-washed. They dashed up to me with the familiar ear-splitting chatter of small boys, "Please, Miss Prior! Sit down, Madam! Talk to us, Madam! 'Tell us a story! tell us a story!" Then, passing the verandahs of a senior house, I found it the haunt of a number of Rapunzels. They looked more odd at this later age, and the oddest Rapunzels of the lot were those that stood five foot eleven in their socks and had young but patriarchal beards as well as waist-long waving hair. They all sat in the sun drying their hair and at my surprise the Punjabi smile immediately flashed forth among the very masculine tresses.

Sunday, it seemed, was the Sikh day of hair-washing. This however is not a religious institution. The country Sikh cleans his hair by larding it with clarified butter (which soon goes rancid on the head) and his religion tells him he must not let his hair be so much as seen : even wives, it is considered by some, must be kept from this edifying sight. Those boys

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had therefore advanced some way along the path of religious emancipation.

And what hair. I had always thought that the hair of men grew no longer than shoulder-length. But now, in a moment, I realized the truth of the story of Absalom, who shored his hair once a year to the weight of two hundred shekels, and was hanged in a tree by his hair. Few of these boys had hair shorter than to their waists, and many longer : masses of wavy rippling hair, none of it black, and generally of a mid-brown shade, fairer in the little boys.

My classes turned out to be delightful. I started with a class of juniors, two junior middle school classes, and one upper middle school. The small boys were still at the fairy-story stage, and loved illustrating out of their heads. The class contained one or two extremely stupid boys, but on the whole they were intelligent. Their English was in most cases in the making : some came from English-speaking homes, some from Indian-speaking homes, a few from Hindi-speaking, some from Pushto-speaking, most from homes that spoke one of the innumerable varieties of Punjabi. All of these might be mutually unintelligible. To put this into English terms, one could say that some of these boys by nature spoke Channel Island French, some Southern English, some very Scottish or Irish English, some Welsh or Gaelic, and most of them dialects as different as Northumbrian from Devonian (which, on the tongues of the people, are as kin and as different as Danish from Dutch). There was the case of one little Pathan boy who went to his house-mistress in a great and dignified anger and addressed a spate of Pushto at her. Some senior Pathan boy was brought in to translate : and the angry little one had said, " Please tell all the other boys to stop talking to me in English as I cannot understand English." They had indeed been baiting him, for the fun of hearing his anger expressed in Pushto, which made them laugh : being a Pathan, he had offered to fight the lot : being Punjabis, it became a great row. But the real joke was, that all along they had been talking Punjabi to him.

My two junior-middles were the greatest fun. The lower class was of an awkward composition, being half lazy and



LIFE BEGINS : YOUNG PATHAN RASCALS

LIFE ENDS : VENERABLE SIKH ELDERS

A PATHAN DOES HIS STUFF

stupid, and half very able. The older class was most pleasurable. Their English by that age (about thirteen) was good : and this particular class was one of those composed of keen-witted rascals, with a few highly self-respecting and elderly stupids left down from the previous year. The first class I took with them, they were busy sizing me up. The departing Principal, Mr. Barry, had said, "If you want to interest these boys, tell them something first-hand about the War in England," which hint I took, with gratifying results. However, about my third or fourth lesson, they staged a riot on my entry. So I shut them up, and said that I should appoint a form-prefect to keep them in order before my classes : and invited them to make suggestions. They accepted the sense of this naturally : democracy is in the blood of the north-west, and village-democracy a living institution still.

However, they were of course boys. They accordingly suggested a Muslim and a Sikh, the first being a nitwit and the second a bad boy and a dolt.

I gave my reasons for objecting to these candidates, where-upon number one squirmed and smiled sheepishly and number two looked (being a very vain boy) most offended. Then I said, "Well, whom would you like least?"

There arose one unison cry from about twenty-five throats, "Not Israr!"

Which was Israr? I asked.

Up stood a fair, rosy, very square, older boy at the back.

"What's your full name?" I said.

"Mohammad Israr Khan, Madam." This came out in a deep voice, accompanied by a slightly interrogative glance round : his English was very shaky.

He had green eyes, and did not look like a Punjabi.

"Are you a Pathan?" I said.

"Yes, Madam!" and at once he smiled, and looked proud.

"Can you manage this class?" I asked.

"Yes, Madam," with a considering glance at the class which told me I had found my man : and the class sighed audibly.

"Very good," I said. "Before I come, you keep this class silent : when I enter, they are to stand up and say good-morning civilly : the same when I go : you will deal with any boy who is troublesome." After that I explained exactly

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what I wanted of them, and what they might expect of me, and we became friends. Israr never failed me : we had many other dealings. I suppose every teacher, in the course of his career, encounters one or two classes which he can really wholly love, as a class : that class was such a one to me.

My remaining class was a small group of junior seniors. They were few enough for the tone of the class to be somewhat informal. They were attractive and pleasant boys : real Punjabis, lazy and rather able. They were grown-up enough to be friends rather than pupils, and they used to tell me all sorts of things about the inside of town, village and home life in the Punjab. They came, however, of Westernized families (with one exception) and so, although they knew all about the rough and backward side of Indian life, they had no experience of it through having lived it : as it might be boys brought up in London and at Harrow, who only on occasional holidays visited their village and native heath in Argyllshire or County Cork. The exception was a wild fellow, the son of a chieftain who lived in the mountains beyond Baluchistan. He became a notable bowler and took three wickets for four balls once in an exciting match. His elder brother had also been at Aitchison, and was removed from it in a hurry. This youth had been no artist, and on being criticized by the art master, had conceived himself to be insulted. Now if you insult a transfrontier tribesman, the insult must be repaid with death. The young gentleman therefore gave out that he intended to murder the art master, and he sent back to his tribe for six feudal yahoos to assist effect this laudable project. Unfortunately (as is the way in India) none of this was a joke, it was all in solemn earnest : so Aitchison despatched the youth home in the wake of his messages. The art master, I am happy to relate, is still alive, though, being a Bengali, he is still subject to waves of apprehension, which he finally satisfied by withdrawing early from Aitchison and settling east in Hindustan.

Part of one's duty was to take meals on certain days of the week with the boarding-houses. It was at this point that one became aware of one of Aitchison's most material achievements—the breaking-down of religious tabus on different denominations and classes eating with one another. The

PUNJAB GASTRONOMY

Muslim can eat with anyone, and he can eat any flesh but the pig : but it must all be slain by *halal*, a process by which the neck is gashed so that the animal bleeds to death (this being based on the Mosaic Law, forbidding flesh to be eaten with blood). Muslims of course are a brotherhood, knowing no caste restrictions, and there is no religious objection to a prince or spiritual teacher eating with a sweeper. The Sikh may eat any flesh, but avoids beef—in all things Sikhs are really akin to the Hindu way of thinking—but his meat must be killed by *jatka*, i.e. it must be decapitated with a sword at one blow. Sikhs are also a brotherhood, and will eat with anyone, but would avoid eating with menials. Hindus are the real problem. Some are so strictly vegetarian that they will not eat even eggs. They are not really supposed to eat meat : but Punjabi Hindus are so broadminded (as we call it)—so lax (as co-religionists from farther east or south would call it)—that they will generally eat anything except beef (the cow being sacred). The School Mess, therefore, provided *halal*-killed dishes and *jatka*-killed dishes and non-meat dishes, beef was never allowed in the compound at all, and then the differences ended. The boys all ate together and there was no fuss about eating vessels or drinking vessels, and in fact they themselves did not care in the least if they strayed into the wrong dishes. Being hefty fellows, they all needed strong food, and I can only remember one vegetarian Hindu family.

In the junior house, though implements were provided, very few used them. The little fellows often ate extremely messily, but they became more adept as they grew out of their home conditions. In the senior houses they quite often ate with implements, but fingers always remained in use. Indian manners allow you to use three fingers only and these should be kept very clean, all moist food being scooped up or pinched up with a fragment of dry chupatti, which is eaten with the mouthful. The chupatti—a solid but delicious dry girdle-cake, very thin and about six inches across (if Hindu) or ten (if Muslim)—is made of coarse whole-wheat flour : most people eat three at a meal, most boys six, and some boys twelve (and look like it). This is the main food, and curds or whey the main embellishment : they drink curd broken in water, for a cooling drink, and also any amount of plain milk : the dishes

BOYS AND OTHER MATTERS

seem to us to be all "curry", since nearly all are yellow and nearly all hot, and very good if you happen to like them : and unendurable if you don't.

All told the Punjabi boy was really a very likeable and lovable creature. This is not to say that they have not their sins, of which more elsewhere : but the product, at any rate as licked into shape at this school, must be classed among the best schoolboys in the world. Of course these boys are by no means all the sons of chiefs or chieftains. Indeed only a handful came from ruling houses, and not half the balance from even a squireen class. The College had entered on a policy of accepting the sons of decent families whose means came from respectable occupations : hence it drew chiefly on a good business and professional class. The College, being a free-lance body answerable to no one but its own Board of Governors and the parents, could please itself about innovations and new policies : thanks to which fact, and thanks to the vision and energy of its late Principal Mr. C. H. Barry, it survives to-day, while so many similarly founded bodies, financed and stultified by Government, have perished on the altar of snobbery. India is a land built up on the principle of snobbery, enshrined by religion in the fatal caste system : and it is partly a tribute to the Punjabi character as exhibited by both boys and parents, that it was possible to transform the old Chiefs' College into a modern school in which the boys ate, slept, worked and played together with no thought of differences in religion or caste.

As a note of interest, I might mention that during the 1939 War, the College accepted two Houses of English boys—an experiment that worked extremely well. The English boys did not lose way educationally, and both they and the Punjabis found one another very congenial—not so surprising perhaps when one considers their not-so-distant cognate origin.

How heartbreaking is the mania for mismanagement which has cast away not only this little unity, but that greater provincial unity of which it was a token ! To-day Aitchison still flourishes, but its Sikh and Hindu boys have all had to be withdrawn, since the Punjab has been cut in two.

CHAPTER 4

SOME GLIMPSES OF THE PUNJAB COUNTRYSIDE

I MAKE no apology for omitting a description of Lahore Old City : Indian cities are curious, teeming and smelly, and Lahore was not remarkable in any way. Nor will I stop to describe the Punjab climate, except to sum it up as sunny in winter, very cold in the shadow and frosty at night—the piercing cold of far inland : in the nearly rainless summer, stunningly hot, with temperatures of 116° or 118° Fahrenheit, liable to thunder- and to dust-storms. The people of the Punjab, even in their thousand and fifteen hundred years in the land, have never become accustomed to the climate. In the cold they rejoice : in the heat they groan. It is their northern constitution, untamed and unconsenting still. This people could afford an interesting study in the effect of climate on character. The heat has undoubtedly made them monumentally lazy—literally bone-lazy : but on the other hand, the piercingly cold winter keeps alive and yearly recreates their tremendous energy.

Having penetrated the new city and the old city of Lahore, and found them as hideous in all respects as one could possibly expect, and the inhabitants as unattractive as the naked desire for gain can make humanity, and knowing that all this sordid teeming ant-hill was as far from representing the real India, as a pebble is from representing a beach—I was longing for any chance to get off into the real countryside.

For the Punjab consists of vast tracts of countryside, and even the capital city of Lahore sits upon it like a small wart on an elephant's flank. And the eleven-twelfths of the Punjab population live in the villages, and are not as the townsman.

So I asked my boys about the villages. They one and all were astonished at me. A village might, if it was your own, exercise a sort of nostalgic attraction : but villages were things to avoid, to escape from. Most of the boys would talk to

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you of "my village", and if you set them one against the other, it became "in MY village", but one and all viewed villages and village life as institutions from which escape was imperative. I never found a boy who thought his village a place to live in and improve. Yet many of them were to become squires (if one may borrow the term), and it was the village and its lands that kept him in funds.

"Why do you want to see villages?" they asked blankly.

"Oh, Madam, when you have seen one Punjab village, you have seen all Punjab villages," said Ajit Singh, a handsome, rosy fellow of fifteen, with grey-green eyes and a pleasant smile. In this he spoke the exact truth, as I afterwards discovered. Ajit's family lived outside Lahore, in "Model Town".

"Have you a village?" I asked.

"Yes, Madam."

"What do they make in it?"

"Carpets, Madam."

We went into the subject.

"And are your people well-behaved?"

"Yes, Madam. Except if they quarrel over a girl."

"What do you mean?"

Ajit smiled and waved his hand.

"We haven't enough girls in my village," he said.

"Why not?"

"I don't know, Madam."

"So what do they do?"

"Madam, two or three brothers club together and buy a wife."

Ajit was quite right: the conjugal problem of his village applies to all the Central Punjab. The births are about equal: yet though the girls command a high price, they are more neglected and fewer girls than boys survive infancy—such is the passion for sons: and when they come to child-bearing (at sixteen or seventeen) they are swept away wholesale by dirt, ignorance and superstition.

The countryside is flat, tufted with groves of fine trees and thick with tall crops growing on a tawny alluvial soil seven feet deep.

A SCOUT WEEK-END

My first village was beyond Okara, and it was not quite a typical Punjab village, though quite typical of its class.

I went off on a Scout week-end. For this particular week-end we took a train for about seventy miles, and then a bus, ending up in a canal rest-house. I was in the rest-house, with one of the Matrons, and the boys and the Master in charge were all in a huge tent. The Scouts did everything for themselves, and it was a pleasure to see these energetic little devils, who would normally expect servants to do everything for them (one of our boys—a real lily, and naturally not a Scout—even had his servant hand him his tooth-brush) turn to and cook and wash-up and make their own beds. They enjoyed it immensely, too.

We went for a walk up the great canal, empty just then, and admired the squares of excellent cultivation, and I saw afar off a village.

"Can I go and see that village, Mr. Omar?" I asked the Master in charge.

"Yes, oh yes, we'll arrange it," he said, in the casual progress of the Scouts' games. He set the boys to playing leap-frog, and, since he was strong and athletic, held two smallish ones upside-down. After that they played a Punjab game called Kabbadi, which had rules I didn't grasp and involved a great deal of jumping, running, and yelling. But he did not forget; in due course he arranged for me to visit the village we could see on the skyline.

Later on in the day the local canal officer appeared, to see that arrangements were satisfactory. He was a large Hindu, a modern man, a good sort of man but obviously lazy, and as obviously no countryman but of the trading community.

The Hindu gentleman sat down with Mr. Omar and myself (the other lady was indoors) and enquired with lazy politeness how long I was from England. Hearing that I was just out, and had been there throughout the war, a torpid interest kindled.

"Why didn't you come out earlier and escape the war?" he asked.

"Because I thought I could help win it at home," I replied: at which he rather opened his eyes, and he asked questions as to conditions, to which I gave accurate answers, but as vivid as I could make them.

GLIMPSES OF THE PUNJAB COUNTRYSIDE

"Yes, yes!" he said finally, "we were all surprised. We thought you were finished: but you surprised us." He considered me, with a kind of idle admiration, as one does a tame tiger that has just shown that its nature still exists. I met many like him. Some educated Punjabis wanted the British Raj to go—not by any means all, however: and of course the country people neither wanted the cessation of their prosperity (as on the whole it was) nor believed for a minute we were going. But no Punjabi I ever met bore the slightest ill-will to any Britisher, or wished him or her personally to go.

Our talk was interrupted by a very engaging and confiding pi-dog puppy of about three months. On seeing me play with it the canal officer at once warmed up, and tried to persuade me to adopt it. He quite urged it: he became animated. It was the last puppy of the litter.

"I can't," I said. "What has happened to the others? Surely there must be a home for this one too."

"I had them put in a sack," he said.

"Oh dear," I said, "did you drown them in the canal?" I did not believe it possible: but you never know! Progress does occur. The gentleman looked shocked.

"I took them to Okara," he said.

"Oh, and did you get homes for them there?" I enquired obtusely.

"I had them let out of the sack in the bazaar," he replied.

"But how would they live?" I asked.

"Oh," he said, with a slightly self-conscious laugh, and a rapidly-sinking interest in the conversation, "the way they do live."

So the modern Hindu man still entertained the old, old Hindu idea. To take life is wicked: for the animal's soul may in a former incarnation have been a human soul. Therefore the unwanted pi-dogs may not be destroyed. The bitch at the canal bungalow will have ten puppies a year for many years, and ten puppies a year will be dumped in Okara market—if the Hindu in charge is kind-hearted, as this man was: but perhaps he only wanted to be rid of feeding them—or they will be left to run wild in the fields: and the place will have ten more dogs a year (not to mention the descendants they

OKARA, A NEW TOWN

will breed)—all very likely to get rabies in the hot weather and go mad and bite other dogs, and cattle, and people : and all those bitten will die horribly.

A Muslim might see it differently, and destroy the dogs. Muslims are generally anti-dog, for the Prophet says that dogs are unclean : but if you keep a dog, it is to be cherished as a member of your household. Punjabi Hindus are not much religion-ridden, and are sometimes enthusiastic vets, and may therefore venture to take life. But on the whole no one troubles to restrain the breeding of dogs.

Next day we went sight-seeing.

Okara was a typical "new town". I suppose it had about a couple of thousand inhabitants. It would class as a large village, or very very small town, in England. It had a long wide market street, hideous from one dusty end to the other. It had an "Aryan High School". In Northern India the word "Aryan" is second only to the word "Bharat" in popularity. The Educational Service has been under Indian control for nearly a generation now. The Aryan High School boys sat on the pavement, under the school-sign, and learned by rote in shrill voices. Perhaps there were fifty or sixty, of differing ages, in charge of one master. From such a school or much worse, came many of our boys. The education was "literary" and, except for the arithmetic, perfectly useless to future peasants or landowners.

One end of Okara smelt of grain, and I believe there were mud-built granaries there. Okara had three notable industries : an Indian-owned cotton-spinning mill ; an immense and famous stud buffalo farm and tinned-milk factory ; and a Government Farm.

We were dumped in the town and let into the factory. All had been "arranged" : instantly the first hitches developed. From first to last we never discovered any responsible office staff. Our canal-friend had obtained us the permission to see the factory as one Hindu from another : yet no one seemed to have heard of us.

So we began by just sitting inside the great gateway for an hour or so. The sun grew hotter and hotter, and no one offered us a seat or water. The boys became restive, and wanted to take their turbans off.

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By the end of the hour, we had collected quite an interesting set of facts.

The factory had a high wall all round. The only exit gate was the one by us. There was a sort of sentry-box, and a gateman. No individual was allowed in or out without a pass. The workers came and went—but not in and out—and were not Punjabi types: they were dark and slight and looked like Deccan people. They did not talk a language anyone could understand. They were quite decently clad. The children were schooled in the compound, marched off to classes in crocodiles. The compound was vast, fairly modern, and without any attempt at gardens or trees or shade. I wondered why it was so rigorously controlled: it was not a secret war factory, after all.

At the end of an hour, we were told that we could not see the factory that day as arrangements were not complete. Telephoning ensued, and at short notice we were all switched over to the tinned-milk factory (owned by the Army) and buffalo farm (owned by the Army and/or the Government)—both a few miles off.

The tinned-milk factory was without a gate-control, and inside the low surrounding wall were stretches of grass, and the factory, both inside and out, appeared clean and pleasant. I need not describe the process, which consisted of warming up and evaporating buffalo milk in immense drums—in a class with the Great Tun at Heidelberg—and canning it. The machinery was manned by Punjabis, mostly Sikhs, who have a flair for engineering and mechanical work.

There was a British Army engineer in charge, with whom I made friends. I asked him how the staff worked. He replied that if you relaxed your supervision for a minute, they slacked off in vigilance—raised the heat of the milk only to approximately the right temperature, for example, so that it later went bad in the tins, or did not evaporate it long enough, so that it was sub-standard, or let the machinery go too long unoiled, and so forth. “Haven’t an idea of always doing a job exactly right,” he said. “But they’re good workers on the whole, and good chaps, and some are A 1.”

He invited us to come round later to his house, to meet his wife.

BUFFALO STUD FARM

Then we saw the buffalo farm.

This was a wonderful stud. We were met by the Indian in charge, a tall genial red-cheeked Punjabi, obviously a son of the soil himself, and immensely keen on his job—very unlike the tradesman canal officer! He smiled at our boys, and as soon as we began to go the rounds, deep called to deep, for with Sikhs and Muslims, farming is in the blood, and our boys chattered delightedly at the sight of the superb stock.

The black water-buffalo is not an attractive beast: but no stock in the world could beat these. There were hundreds of them, in long stalls, twenty a side, over hundreds of acres of land. All was clean and good and particularly cool, for the buffalo craves water. This stock is sold out to the province, and much sought after for its immense milking qualities. Never had I seen such beasts: they were like great black tanks, their bare black skins glossy with good living, and over each cow in milk, her milk-record and name. Each stall was a vista of plump black buttocks and backs.

In the Punjab, the cow is used to produce bullocks for ploughing, and the buffalo is the milk-giver. There are good milking-cows, and the Government has set up studs to breed milking-strains and ploughing-strains, and Punjab cattle are a far finer stock than average stock in other parts of India, where a good cow is a cow that gives two quarts a day. Still the buffalo is the milking-queen, and gives gallons. Two ideas, however, ruin Indian stock-handling. One is the Hindu reluctance to control the marriages of the Sacred Cow, and the pious turning loose of any seedy bull calf that happens to be born white, who, for the sake of his holy whiteness—itsself generally the result of in-breeding—is allowed to eat off sweet and vegetable stalls and to mate as he chooses. In Lahore I saw no such bulls. In Delhi—further east and more Hindu—they are as common as pariah dogs. So the stock degenerates. The second ruinous idea is the prevailing Indian reluctance to spend money on upkeep. An Indian farmer may buy an expensive Government-stock super buffalo: and he will expect that buffalo to go on milking gallons, though he will only give her a starveling handful of hay a day. Her fat will melt off her buttocks and flanks: her bones will begin to stick up in the usual Indian way: in two seasons she is a

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bony buffalo giving not so much more milk than another. The farmer will mate her to any village buffalo bull : and her calves will pain him by being distinctly unlike the splendid calves on the stud farm.

However, when all is said and done, the Punjabis have an idea of comfortable living themselves, and money is apt to pass through their hands, to be spent rather than buried : and they have in general robust common sense. Consequently they often lay out money on the keep of their animals, and the population in general is keen on the great horse fairs and cattle fairs introduced by the Government. And the solid enthusiasm of such a man as the Muslim in charge of this huge farm, or the Sikh in charge of our school farm, or the man I met later in charge of a State citrus farm, is a pleasure to meet indeed : for those men bring to their work (it seems to me) something of the spirit the Elizabethans brought to their explorations. But they are all sprung of agricultural stock : seldom does the trading Hindu show this turn. He can pass the examinations : he cannot acquire the aptitude.

Sending the boys off in their bus, we just had time to keep our engagement with the factory overseer's wife. He picked us up, and we drove beyond the farm in the direction of the distant canal. Right and left stretched the dreary ochre plain, cultivated here in large expanses, for it was a Government farm on "Government waste", i.e. semi-desert land, raising nothing, till the building of the canal brought it water and enabled its rich fertility to be used. Such farms are run partly to allow experiment in crossing or acclimatizing new cottons or grains or canes and partly to demonstrate the advantages of large fields, and partly to demonstrate model methods. As research stations, they are invaluable : as model farms, they do not convince, because they do not have to pay or perish.

At this time of year, the desert looked a desert : the winter crops were harvested, the summer not yet sown—the Punjab raises two crops a year, temperate winter ones, and tropical summer ones. It ought to be a rich land indeed !

To the left was a thirsty grove of mangoes, the trunks going down into bare earth. Ahead, to the right of the straight macadam road, a few thorn trees. Far ahead, to the left,

A PECULIAR FACTORY

lying back from the road, a row of tall poplars or blue gums. Otherwise desert.

We spun along the dry road, and turned down a dry earth lane towards the row of blue gums. Quite suddenly—no desert, but a fairy garden. Behind the row of gums, a long deep garden, great banks of flowers under the boles of the trees—nasturtiums, petunias, stocks, hollyhocks—little green velvet lawns, banks of flowers to the left—a riot of blossom, with water-drops sparkling on the herbage—and embowered on the left, a row of pretty little bungalows with deep arched verandahs. The temperature of this little plot was several degrees cooler than the noon furnace of the desert outside. It was really as if some genie of the Arabian Nights had conjured this cool sunny paradise out of nothing.

We met our host's wife : she was just out from England, a pretty fair girl, dignified and charming : and she added the last touch to the pretty bungalows and rioting gardens.

And the genie that made it all possible—Okara the new town, the cotton mill, the sleek buffaloes, the milk factory, the gardens, and the girl—was canal water.

Later on, we saw the cotton mill, a guide being provided, lest we should stray from the path appointed. It almost made me think we had got into a Russian factory by mistake. We began in the room where the cotton is stamped down. Here there were clouds of fluff, and the workers were supposed to wear cotton masks, but were not doing so. We were escorted through the thread-spinning rooms, where there was less fluff, the various loom-rooms, the dyeing rooms, the finishing rooms. I suppose it was all quite the usual thing.

What struck me as odd was the prevalence of the non-Punjabi type : there were very few Punjabis working there. Enquiries revealed that it was in fact an alien Hindu population imported from the Deccan, a couple of thousand miles away. They spoke a totally foreign language. The local Punjabis greatly detested these people, and also detested the factory. The workers were kept in the compound, let in and out only on pass. This particular factory was owned by the gigantic Birla combine, and its proceeds went to help finance Congress and Mahatma Gandhi : that is to say, it was owned by great

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Hindu business barons of the money-lending caste, whose main interest was to finance into the saddle of Government the Hindu Congress Party, which aims at the permanent supremacy in India of the Brahman and the Bunnia, the ancient castes of the priest and the money-lending tradesman. This particular factory was, it seemed, respectably run. Now, however, I could understand its curious closedness. There are many of these factories planted about in the Punjab, worked by imported foreigners. In most cases their pay is kept a couple of months in arrears, which ensures that the helots, however unhappy, will not be able to strike or run away. Some day, maybe, it will dawn on us that Congress is a reactionary Party, aiming to keep in being the oldest and cruellest social and religious system known in the world, and modern only to the extent that it uses such modern gadgets as newspapers and factories and reinforces its rule by the totalitarian method.

So that factory was much more interesting than it looked.

Life was rendered diverting by a camp-fire sing-song, at which the boys did some comic extempore theatricals with great *éclat* : we also had a treasure-hunt among the cultivation. This hunt ended in an amicable shindy between the trailers and the trail-layers, half the followers losing the clues and the other half by accident cutting in about six clues ahead and falling in with the trail-layers before they had got to the setting of the treasure. This obliged the boys to go back over a labyrinth of little dykes, locating the missing clues and arguing like a pack of hounds over each. My village hovered like a mirage on the flat skyline and once we came within three-quarters of a mile of it.

We also received a call from the senior canal officer, the father of one of our Scouts. He brought his wife to call on the other lady and myself. Our Hindu friend, the canal engineer, politely appeared, in the presence of his senior, and they talked with our Scoutmaster on the lawn.

The senior engineer's wife was wrapped in a purple silk *burqa* of modern design, and fled like a hare, or as if suddenly naked, round the front of the car and dashed with a total disregard of dignity into our sitting-room, where she threw

A MODERN VILLAGE

off her disguise and revealed herself for a very fair and pretty woman. She was shy but eager, an Old Girl of Queen Mary's College (her husband an Old Boy of Aitchison) and talked English well. Her little son came and joined us in due course. In about ten minutes she said good-bye, stood up abruptly but prettily, put on her *burqa* again, looked with trepidation up and down the verandah, and flung herself headlong at the car. The nearest door was that of the driver's seat, and her modesty obliged her to scramble in, head well down below the level of the window, past the high steering pillar across to the other seat rather than go round the bonnet and risk being seen, even in her wrap, by our Mr. Omar and the Hindu engineer. Never in my life have I seen a lady of culture and family in quite such a peculiar attitude. The men on the lawn were not even looking our way. Her son got in as well, and for safety's sake she turned her back on the lawn. The matron and I went and joined the gentlemen.

Purdah is never a dignified institution.

Next day, with a squad of boys, we really set off to explore that village. We approached it by a road about a foot deep in dust, having the bad luck to meet a bullock-cart, which moved in the heart of a rolling cloud of dust quite fifteen feet high.

On either hand stretched the admirable cultivation, all in same-sized squares of about a quarter-acre, all intersected with water channels and dykes. The whole area of land attached to that village was like a market garden, prime crops in perfect cultivation, mostly of the order of pulse, sugar-cane, roots, and fine fodder. It was a pleasure to see, and unusually closely cultivated. There were a few patches of trees and bushes, but not many.

This village was not surrounded by a rampart of stench, and that was the first sign it gave of not being a typical village : for the custom in all natural Indian villages is for the villagers to ordure round the village in an immemorial ring, the stench whereof, if bottled, could be used bloodlessly to win a modern war. Next it signalled its usualness by two large ponds, one dry and the other drying out. Next it signalled its singularity by a straight spacious road advancing to the centre (all ankle

GLIMPSES OF THE PUNJAB COUNTRYSIDE

deep in dust of course) where was a square cross-roads, in the centre a fine modern well. The houses were all of mud, the yards inside clean and orderly, and the whole village had the usual blind look of a place where no windows are ever set on the outside walls.

We no sooner reached the well, than people began to collect, a few buxom girls, a number of youths and men. Among them was the village accountant, who had a few words of English. They all beamed and chattered and the boys were quite at home and I made them explain themselves. A glass materialized from somewhere and we were offered water.

Presently the crowd opened and a tall man approached. He was a ruddy bronze, handsome, splendidly dignified, melancholy, probably fifty years of age, and clearly a man of authority and much respected.

"He is the Numberdar," said the village clerk: this was the village headman. He took charge of us with that fine natural civility of the self-respecting Indian peasant, the like of which is not to be found unless it is in Arabia, and offered to show us the village. We salaamed to the crowd, and went off under his wing. In his rough head-cloth and clean but natural-coloured cotton, he paced his long steps like a king.

My knowledge of the language was slight, but I managed a few sentences, and used the boys for what I could not say.

"Are you Muslims?" I asked, having seen a small mosque.

"Yes, Huzoor."

"All the people?"

"Yes, Presence."

"What is your tribe?"

"We are Arains."

That explained the cultivation at once: this great tribe are noted for their exceptional industry and market-gardening propensity. All the same, Arains are generally Hindus. In the Hindu caste-system, they are looked down upon because they deal in vegetables and do not plough for wheat. However, they respect themselves.

"What is the name of your village?"

The answer baffled me. I got him to repeat it, saying that my Hindustani was very bad: whereat the man of the melancholy but kingly countenance smiled his one and only



A VILLAGE SON : BHOLU, THE PUNJAB'S CHAMPION WRESTLER

A VILLAGE MOTHER : DAILY TOIL

CANAL COLONY THREE-FIVE-SIX

smile—a pleasant one—and repeated the name a third time. It was not surprising it baffled my Hindustani, for it now came out as “Threefivesix”.

“Threefivesix?”

“Yes, Huzoor.”

Light suddenly dawned.

“Is this a canal village?”

“Yes, Huzoor.”

“How long have you settled here?”

“Five years, Huzoor.”

Five years. Five years since those men and women came here, to turn a desert into a garden: and here it was, with the hot breeze blowing over the grain and the lucerne, as neat and rich as hair brushed and oiled. Here they built their mud village on the Government plan given them—the four wide roads, with the big Government-given well at the crossing—and in the hollows they made in taking their mud, formed the two village ponds: and with pluck, precision, ancestral skill, and canal water, Canal Colony Three-Five-Six came into being.

The man took us over the crops. In one field two women and two men were pulling carrots and loading them on a cart: he took a couple of handfuls and, unhurried, topped and tailed them, brushed the earth off, and offered them to us with courtesy. We ate them on the spot.

It was noticeable that here all the fields were of equal size, which gave the whole area a very tidy look. In older parts this is not the case: the fields are a crazy patch-work and often tiny. Such a state of affairs is due to the native custom of dividing the land equally between all the sons, and decimating a property in two or three generations—and moreover, a man may inherit three little patches all half a mile from one another, as the other sons all want a share of the good land and none of the bad. In such an area a man wastes much time in getting to and fro between his fields, and it is difficult to water and watch his crops. The Government have tried to effect consolidation of holdings, and to encourage the acceptance of the law of primogeniture—the land to the eldest son, and money compensation to the others: which is very much against their tradition, and besides there is often no ready

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money. However, a twin policy has been the introduction of co-operative country banks, and the banking of money in banks instead of in female jewellery and by burial in the ground : and this habit has caught on and spread very widely and satisfactorily. Indeed it may even survive the departure of the British commissioners, who used to inspect the books and put down roguery : for the peasant has a natural inclination to honesty and has horse-sense. But, with the horrors of the gigantic and violent migrations of August 1947, who knows ?

Conducted by our kingly Arain, we came to a field where sugar-cane was being cut, the juice boiled, evaporated, crushed and run out on to a clean tiled square on the earth. It was boiled in a flat pan a yard across, over a fire in the ground with great tunnel vents on each side for the draught ; when it had gone thick, it was dipped out with a dipper and hardened quite fast in the tiled square, which was about four feet each way. It quickly formed into a rich golden sugar, bitter and delicious, was cut, handled into round heavy cakes, and stacked on a mat to harden. This was gur, pure and good as nature. It goes to the market, is "cleaned", and possibly refined into white cane sugar : but a greater part of it is sold as sandy rough sugar. Most of the processing and all the retailing is done by the Hindu trading-caste, and in the "cleaning" the sugar becomes mysteriously adulterated with other matter—some of it real sand which cannot be detected except in cooking, and increases the weight nicely.

Needless to say, the boys drank many glasses of the raw juice and ate a good deal of gur. I sampled both myself.

It was time for us to go. When we announced this, the Numberdar at once gave orders to give us a generous supply of sugar-canes, and detailed a man to carry them. He did not think it at all proper for the boys to carry the canes.

He accompanied us part of the way, and I was wondering how to tell the good man he need not come the whole way, when he solved my problem at exactly the correct distance by asking leave to go back.

So we politely parted.

Arriving with our loot, we became for the moment the envy of those who had felt too lazy to accompany the explorers.

DUSTOOR !

Mr. Omar laughed at us, and detained the bearer of the sugar-cane in order to make up a suitable counter-present : which took the form of a supply of oranges for the Numberdar, and a rupee for the bearer.

Dustoor ! Custom !

Had we been Colonel Tod visiting a Rajput prince a hundred years ago the exchange would have been trays—or shields—of valuable Indian shawls, and a damascened Indian sword, against an English sword and suitable equivalents.

But at our level, Scouts and Arains, it was sugar-cane against oranges, and one-and-six to the bearer.

CHAPTER 5

SOME ASPECTS OF MODERN INDIAN LIFE, CHIEFLY HINDU

LAHORE in 1947 was very different even from Delhi in 1936. With the Indianization of the Services, one might have expected to meet many Indians in a social way in the capital of India in 1936, or in Bombay, which is so much more of a great city than either. In Bombay, indeed, one did meet them on an equal footing, ten years ago : but the Indians one met were almost all Parsis, and the Parsis have never really become Indian. They preserve their sense of being Persians and of being in exile : their ways are not Indian at all, either in religion, society or ethics.

This time I did not go to Delhi, but I am told a great change has come over Delhi life. Ten years ago, many Indians drew the European pay of high posts, but they lived in Indian style, not spending money on entertaining, and keeping buffaloes or goats in their unkempt gardens (though gardeners and water are provided by the Public Works Department). If you went into their houses, the wives could not entertain. The Muslim wife would be as untrained and unenlightened as the buffalo. The Hindu wife, while less stultified by the tradition of purdah (Hindu women are not, in their own social right, secluded), would have only one idea in her head—to serve her husband, her Lord and God, hand and foot. Once in Delhi we went to tea with an “advanced” Indian and his wife. The small and delicate woman was charming, in an infantile way. Her husband had clearly drilled her in the etiquette of a tea-party, and had taken her out a great deal. (It must be remembered that to entertain guests, in any kind of way at all, is no part of an Indian wife’s view of life : she expects to do the cooking and remain out of sight.) She had been told to sit behind the tea-tray and pour out and to stay sitting and on no account to display disquietude on seeing her husband get up and serve the visiting ladies with eatables. In Hindu life, for the male so to serve the female is against all traditional law and order :

MODERN WIVES IN REQUEST

each man must be served by his mother or wife, and the women, later and apart, eat the leavings. There was a lavish supply of food. The timid wife did her job, but you could see her eye uneasily following her husband on his unheard-of avocations. He served her, and lastly he helped himself. She seemed to be sitting on pins and needles. He talked very pleasantly: he was a very likeable man. His plate was emptied. In a second the wife was up, a smile of familiar ease and pleasure on her face: she took a dish in both hands, and offered it to him, humbly bowing her head as to an idol—the daily ritual, popping out willy-nilly in the wrong place. The embarrassed host blushed at the sudden exhibition of real Hindu life.

In Muslim life, both sexes eat together, and this subservience does not exist. Curiously, the Hindu wife, by tradition a sole wife enjoying a free, exalted, and unsecluded station, in actual life is a slave: the Muslim wife, with far fewer traditional rights, her husband's chattel, liable to be divorced out of hand, liable to be one of four, competing with concubines, her very soul a doubtful quantity, in actual life enjoys an equal station with her man.

Now, however, things are much changed. There is quite a large class of young man who would live a modern life if he could get a modern wife. A man's home is always what his woman makes it. Many of those educated and quite genuinely go-ahead men would much sooner live in a neat, intelligently-run modern home, than in the disorderly, slipshod, often run-down, old-fashioned Indian home. There is, at least, an increasing class of non-purdah, or purdah but educated, wives available for such young men. There are not nearly enough, but they are becoming available, and intelligent or kind parents make a real effort to match their educated son or daughter more than merely on a physical or money basis. No one who has seen them can forget those advertisements in Indian papers—fifty a day in a Lahore issue alone: "Young handsome Khatri Bachelor, B.A., seeks bride, tall, fair. Money no consideration." "Healthy Sikh youngman, B.Sc., seeks match, must be B.A." "Beautiful Arora virgin, dowry to good home, aged eighteen, trained all domestic arts seeks suitable bachelor. Over age twenty-seven need not apply." "Attractive Hindu

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widower in Government employ Rs. 300/- p.m., seeks bride, B.A. preferred." "Hindu bachelor, age twenty-eight, steady job Rs. 1000/- p.m., prospects partnership large store, seeks bride not younger twenty, tall, fair, University educated, able entertain. Appearance, ability all, dowry no consideration." "Beautiful Hindu girl, trained Kindergarten, earning Rs. 100/- p.m., tall, fair, requires educated husband, must be in steady employ."—As may be seen, the newspaper is displacing the hereditary barber match-maker, much to the latter's disgust. One may add, that a girl over twenty or a man over thirty unmarried are presumed in India to be unmarried because he or she is impotent or incapable unless reason be otherwise shown. It is very difficult to get married if it is left "too late". The degrees in the advertisements are demanded or detailed partly to secure a cultured match, but largely as cash investments displacing a bride-price or dowry. B.A. wives cut both ways: while humanized companions, they are generally in violent revolt against a life of domestic chores: they want their two or three babies all right, but they also want more servants. However they are often ready to take work and help pay for the establishment.—My instances are out of Hindu papers: Muslims prefer to marry near relations, which to Hindus is forbidden. There is, however, nowadays another sort of wife, besides the old-fashioned Indian wife and the educated Indian wife. This is the European wife. Punjabi men are themselves most personable. Once out of their dhotis and salwars, and having given up spitting and chewing betel and hawking and candidly scratching themselves in unmentionable places, and having learnt to hand food to ladies before helping themselves, and wait for ladies to precede them through doors, they are acceptable to Europeans. Less obvious peculiarities will only be revealed in intimacy. As may be seen from the foregoing matrimonial advertisements, tallness and fairness are always at a premium in the Punjab: for the North-western Indian, whether Muslim, Sikh or Hindu, knows himself to be of a once-white race, and prefers fairness of skin to beauty of feature any day, and is always aiming to breed fair children. Persons being agreeable, and manners conformable, these men do not find it difficult to recommend themselves to European women, and increasing numbers of

MIXED MARRIAGES

English, Scandinavian, and German women have married Indians. I do not allude to unsuitable marriages contracted between Indian students and barmaids or landlady's daughters over here, which alas are many: and many is the unhappy English girl stuck away in some horrible shack in a bazaar or inaccessible village, bearing her children and eating her heart out in nauseating conditions. I mean marriages between self-respecting women and Indians of gentle class and good education. This is a new phenomenon.

Such marriages are many, in Delhi I believe very many: and in spite of the stresses, by no means unsuccessful. In a Muslim family, a Christian wife is no great difficulty, for the religions are both derived from the Jewish, and the practice of circumcision, which is a religious obligation in Islam, is common among us for medical reasons. In a Hindu family, however, even of the advanced kind, a non-Hindu wife is greatly resented, for the shaping of the child's religious outlook is always the Hindu mother's work. To marry a European at all, a Hindu man must virtually be a renegade from his religion: he must be very unorthodox indeed to view with equanimity the impious state of his offspring. Sikhs, on the other hand, will do almost anything to secure a fair wife and re-establish the fair strain—which is not surprising, because they are so very often almost fair themselves: and they do not care about the religious issue, for the religious training is taken in hand by men when a boy reaches the age of seven, and is a most thorough indoctrination. Also, the Sikhs having renounced idolatry, and there being nothing whatever objectionable in their religion or its Book, apart from a certain belligerence and a certain confusion in the texts: and all being welcome in their places of worship, the religious background is not obnoxious to a Westerner. In the case of both Muslims and Sikhs, the wife is not her husband's slave—unless she lets it come to that—and they eat together, and in the case of Sikhs, the women are very much out and about.

It is most noticeable that this considerable crop of mixed marriages is a Punjab phenomenon. It has no parallel in other parts of India. Indians have often asked me, rather sadly—what do the English think of these marriages, and the children thereof? An awkward question! As to the marriages,

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if the manners of the couple stand up to the requirements of Western society, they seem to be perfectly acceptable. I suppose in every English heart there is rather a feeling that *that* girl is lost to us : that she will be lucky if her future remains stable and her husband faithful : and it will be a pity about her children.

No one ever says the words, of course. In practice, it all depends on the pluck and character of the wife. It is useless to expect an Indian husband to be physically faithful : on the other hand, he will be very unlikely to divorce. He will be devoted to his children. In civic morals he will steer, almost certainly, a crooked course. *Dustoor ! Custom !* As to the children, their acceptability in marriage with Europeans depends entirely on the religious and social stamp the mother has set on them. Are their ideas of honesty and sex-morality English, or Indian ?—that is the question. If the father is a Punjabi, Brahman or Khatri, Muslim or Sikh, in person the children will come out rosy but slightly tanned—or may be quite fair and even blond—and their complexions will be the great joy of their father and not at all strange to their mother : and their features and build will be perfectly familiar to both, for when all is said and done, the middle and upper class, and agricultural, Indian of the north-west is an old white North European stock still pure-bred, much of it having entered India only fifteen hundred years ago. But if a Western woman marries a Bengali of any but the Brahman caste, or a Madrassi, her children will be decidedly dark and very strange to her, and she will not find, as the Punjabi's wife does, that Englishmen wish to marry her daughters, and her sons will not be kindly viewed by English girls.

How truly is *varna*—colour, caste—the rule of India ! Many Indians have raged furiously at me on the subject of the colour-bar in Africa : for in Africa the dusky Indian, generally an immigrant from Central India, is classed with the black African not merely because of his colour, but because of the messy way he lives. Consequently the Sikhs and Hindu Khatri of North-western India, who in India have known social acceptance by the Europeans, find themselves classed as “coloured”. It isn't that they love the African : they have never generously felt the wrongs of the American African, for

COLOUR-BAR AND CASTE

in America Indians are not classed with blacks. It isn't that they love the dark Dravidian Indian brother : they would never marry with him. They are quite happy in India, where the colour-bar has been rigorously enforced for millennia : for in India, you see, they are comfortably entrenched at the top of the scale, at the white end. The whole caste-system of India is based upon giving all the dirty work of the community to the darkest of the community, and the least, lightest, most intellectual and most remunerative work to the fairest, with the middle-brown in the middle castes doing the middling-dirty work of money-lenders and middle-man. Hindus are energetic in denying this self-evident truth. Punjabi Indians don't like the colour-bar in Africa because it riles them to find themselves on the dark side of the bar. They have no objection to the harsh quintessence of the colour-bar system in India, because they are at the top, palest and therefore, in Indian tradition, noblest of all.

The India to which I had returned seemed in many ways very advanced and modern : but I found almost at once that it was the same old India after all, as far as the Hindus were concerned, as the following homely incident will serve to illustrate.

One of my first requirements in my new work was part of the services of a sweeper, to remove my soil from my bath-room twice or three times a day, and sweep my floors. This work my bearer, though by origin a water-carrier and a Muslim, would of course not do : it was "not bearer's work". These services for a household of one person are not enough work for one man, even in India, where all, high and low, aim to do as little work as possible for as much as they can get.

I therefore applied to the Personnel Manager, an energetic and excellent man, an engineer by profession, and a Hindu.

"Krishan Lal Sahib," I said, "can you fix me up with a share in a sweeper's services ? I hear one man usually serves several masters' families in the compound."

He hummed a bit and said he would think about it.

Next day I returned to the attack.

"Well, Miss Prior," he said, "I suppose if you had one of our sweepers, you'd expect him to sweep the floors of your rooms, as well as do that other work ?"

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"Certainly!" I said.

"I think," he said, "it would be better if you got someone from your English friends outside."

"But how inconvenient. Why?" I asked.

He hummed and hawed further, but seeing I meant to make him state his reason, he said:

"You see, Miss Prior, we look on these things differently. A man who does that work would never be allowed so much as to enter any other of the rooms in our house. So I think you had better try elsewhere."

I said, with as much innocence as I could muster, "Oh! then who sweeps the rooms out?"

He hesitated, and then said, "Our own ladies do that."

"Well, Krishan Lal Sahib," I said, "surely the Muslim masters let the sweeper sweep out their rooms."

"Oh no," he said.

There was no more to be got there. Clearly he was not going to put any school sweeper in the way of getting ideas above his station. I betook myself to Latif.

"Latif," I said, "is it true you Muslims share this horrible view of sweepers—that they are so vile by calling that their presence would pollute your living-rooms, so they aren't allowed to sweep them?"

"Of course not," she said, "any of our servants can go anywhere in the house, provided they are clean." And that was true: only in a strict Muslim house, a man sweeper would not be allowed in the ladies' rooms.

So next I went to the mess-supervisor, an Indian Christian lady of ex-South Indian Brahman family: and she fixed me up at once, and sent me a Sikh sweeper with a sweet and beautiful Punjabi face, whose ragged but very cleanly presence in my rooms as he patiently and gently swept the floors was never anything but a pleasure to me. Sometimes I saw his wife too, and she also was lovely, with a honey-coloured skin. I was well pleased with my bargain.

That is partly why Europeans in India are so much resented: we are paler, and *ipso facto*, according to Hindu thought, if it follows its own practice and logic, nobler than the palest and noblest Indians. It doesn't matter that *we* do not think

THE HINDU GULF

that a white skin is a noble thing. Yet we cannot deny that we are still rather sticky and stand-offish, and have in the past been sometimes arrogant towards the inhabitants of the land. Be it noted, however, that anti-British feeling is Hindu feeling. The Muslims, with their ideal of no-class un-colour-barred brotherhood, their conception of wealth as a thing here to-day and gone to-morrow, and their tradition of civic rule, have never much resented the British, nor much wanted them to go. *Varna* is not their invention or their belief. "Under you," said a Muslim gentleman to me, "we recognize that we can have an honourable career. We conquered once: you conquered us. We understand one another. Why do you want to go?" With Sikhs, it is much the same: and it is to be remembered that they are led by the free and large principality of Patiala, hitherto restrained but not by any means ruled by Britain. But to the Hindu, our colour and our non-Hinduism and our democratic notions are a standing challenge to all that Hinduism stands for—to wit, the supremacy of the fair, fine-featured, intellectual Brahman and the upper castes. Marriage is physically possible. Mentally, impossible. Only lapsed Muslims or lapsed Christians can really marry with Hindus: and these will be lapsed Hindus.

I do not think one ever, in intimate talk with a Hindu, quite escapes this carefully unexpressed undertone: for either the Hindu has abandoned the old ways and the old thought, and is conscious he is severed from his kind: or he has not, and is conscious of the gulf between you and him. None but the young are unselfconscious. It makes the Hindu strangely nervous in European company; however brilliant or accomplished a man or woman may be, he or she in your presence is in the presence of a fatal challenge. No Muslim man or woman ever exhibits this deep and carefully-hidden nervousness, nor any Sikh, male or female. The Muslim and the Sikh are born to stout-hearted creeds of human equality. They don't think themselves better than others: so it follows they don't think themselves worse than others. Any Hindu thinks himself better than heaps of others, and the bottom-most can think themselves better than the souls reincarnated in dogs or fleas: so it follows that they who till a hundred years ago thought their thinking and practice the best and only

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way of life, are deeply shaken by the challenge of the fairer, more energetic, apparently more able and more potently learned Westerner. The Hindu "inferiority complex" is in fact just what an inferiority complex always is—a challenged self-conceit.

However, there are exceptions. The Hindu Rajput, the fighting man of "princely" stock, being a man of the sword, and ready to throw over his religious rules (except regarding marriage) whenever circumstances demand, is so much a real man that he does not feel inferior to anyone at all. The Hindu Jat, born to the plough, and a very loose sort of Hindu, is in exactly similar case. And, I am bound to add, the great Hindu trading-class of the Punjab, the Khattris, are also only lightly yoked under Hinduism, and quite likely to give and take a punch on the nose, and they do not suffer much from an inferiority complex. Even the Punjabi Brahman is a companionable creature, and not too particular about food and drink, and is certainly not allowed by his co-religionists to think himself entirely superior: and it makes a man of him. In the Punjab, he is regarded as a hanger-on rather than a religious Lord or even God. The Hindu Bunnia is reverent to Brahmans: the Khatri uses his necessary services and that is all.

The fact is, the more manly and the further from money-lending the population, the less is the Brahman regarded and the more is the European viewed without rancour. The Deccan or Puna Brahmans are very different from the Punjab and north-western Brahmans: the southern Brahmans are subtle and unchallenged, for they lord it over a dark, short, alien, and much more backward and stupid population. While the Punjab population knows exactly how many beans make five and is nothing if not manly and jolly. It is not surprising that two-thirds of its religionists follow brotherhood religions, while the remaining third, the Hindus, being of the same stock, are remarkably un-bound by caste, and their religion clear of the horrors practised east and south. "Please come to my niece's wedding," said a Hindu friend to me, "we tell *all* our friends to come. It is very simple. My niece is twenty-three. We do not like the ways that the Bengali Hindus bring with them."

ORTHODOXY AND HONESTY

Indeed, Punjabi Hinduism is Hinduism more or less undeformed, more or less in its pristine cleanness. Yet, to the Bengali and the man of Madras and Travancore, whose religion is encrusted with observances and deformities and horrors and aberrations, the Punjabi Hindu is "unorthodox", "very lax". Even so are the Anglicans, Protestants and German Old Catholics of Europe "unorthodox", "very lax", and even damned, to the saint-propitiating, Mary-worshipping, pilgrimage-going, priest-ridden Romanists of France or Italy or Spain.

Through the kindness of a friend, I was offered the job of doing a text-book, which led to a series of very agreeable acquaintanceships.

My future publisher enjoyed the reputation of being the most honest publisher in Lahore. I wondered what this meant. I discovered that what it meant was, that he was unlikely to run off private editions as soon as my back was turned. For in India, it is now accepted that the "royalty" system holds, i.e. an author receives so much per cent of the published price of a book, on each copy sold. The author has the right to see the publisher's accounts, and those have to be audited by a firm of accountants. In India, the system is adopted for the sake of an appearance of modern rectitude. Generally, the publisher's accounts are not audited. Hence it is easy to hoodwink the author if he demands to see the accounts. Even if they are audited, an average rascally publisher waits till his author has gone to Kashmir, Calcutta, Bombay, England, or simply to his village, and then he runs off as many unmentioned editions as he can, whereof the author sees no percentage at all. Unless he has a kind friend on the spot who happens to notice the privateered editions, the author will never be any the wiser. He may wonder a bit why his editions have not the sale expected.

All Indian business is like this. If you are a grain dealer, you put dirt to weigh in with the grain, even to a quarter or a third. If you are a cotton dealer, you mix the shorter cheaper Indian staple with the Indian-American staple. If you have a wool shop, you may re-hank all the imported wool so that every ounce is only three-quarters of an ounce. If you are

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a coal controller, you hand it out privately to your pals. If you get a building contract, you put in the shoddiest materials that will remain upright, bribing the assessor to pass the completed work as "according to specification". Business and middle-men are predominantly Hindus, and Hindu business morality may be summed up, "cheat if you can make it pay". Bribe-money is a recognized expense, in business and in litigation. Scandals occur in the highest places. A Congressman scarcely second to Nehru had a son doing splendidly in the Bombay black market. A highly-placed Lahore gentleman, living a modern life, was found to be the controlling magnate of the ghastly gang of Lahore beggars, most of whom are bought as children and deliberately deformed to fit them to beg as hopeless cripples. And so on. A bird in your hand is a bird to pluck. Hindu business acumen has not yet discovered that dishonesty does not pay.

Even in Aitchison, Hindu business morality revealed itself. One of the Hindu staff, an honest man handling a large portion of school funds with entire trustworthiness and integrity, decided to take advantage of the interregnum to force a more advantageous contract for himself out of the Acting Principal. He pretended to resign in order to seek another post, and faked the whole situation, with the help of friends. Finally he achieved by duplicity what he was not entitled to by right. In planning and executing this scheme, he had been in the first place advised, and then helped, by another Hindu on the staff, a very senior and honourable man with a long record of fine service. The plan would not have worked, of course, with either the past or the future permanent Principals: and in passing, I take leave to remark that discontent and intrigue always started among the Sikhs and the Hindus—the Muslims having a very different idea of loyalty and expedience. As for the two Hindus who did not disdain to work this little plot, they were otherwise men of the highest reliability. This kind of chicanery is almost inseparable from the Hindu business character.

Punjabi business morality, however, is slightly ahead of that of other regions. The Muslim loathes usury, and knows what honesty is: his swindling is rather like that of a greedy or rascally boy. The Sikh, more often than not, takes a

HOW THE S.P.C.A. WORKED

pride in his work. The whole province, setting aside the Hindu castes devoted to money-lending and trade, is at no remove from agriculture : and from this source they draw a rugged and deep honesty. The countryman may burst out into murder or violent redress, but he knows you can't cheat or hurry nature. He may try to pull a fast one on you : but it is unlikely. The home of swindling is the home of the middle-man : the city.

The last days of the Lahore Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals can provide an illustration of the difficulties of administering any organization in India fairly. Lahore boasted a fine veterinary institute and was remarkably free of scavenging dogs, and the tonga-ponies were victimized only within limits : the Society was efficient. Subscriptions came from Hindus and Muslims—the Hindus being the heavier subscribers, for they are the richer and the more charitable—and both communities were content so long as they could prevail on Englishmen of good standing to act as Secretary and Treasurer. In the last days, however, violent communal cleavage developed, each creed struggling to preponderate in membership and to secure the offices—since the British were all departing and with them the hope of neutral and honest Officers. The trouble, in this case, started right at the bottom.

At the bottom of the organization were the men who patrolled the streets, to prevent pony-beating and other offences upon animals. They were, of course, of both religions. This did not in the least affect either the men themselves in the exercise of their duties, or their victims : except when instigated to violence by their irresponsible leaders, the *hoi polloi* pay little attention to one another's creeds. The street watchers of course pleaded to humanitarian feelings when securing their jobs : their main motive, however, was not the prevention of cruelty, but steady pay and an official arm-band. The official arm-band gave them a status of dignity and authority—i.e. a chance to squeeze others legally, in fact they enjoyed the status and fruits of a sort of minor policehood. If they saw cruelty being done, they fell upon it. A certain number of cases they duly reported, in order to appear to be doing their work. These cases would then be fined by law. However, most delinquents were willing to pay a bribe that

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represented a fraction of the fine, to the S.P.C.A. man who spotted them but did not, if the blackmail were paid up, report the cases. In many cases the cruelty was nominal and the S.P.C.A. men were simply small blackmailers, and they made an appreciable amount out of the pickings. Though this system was corrupt and not at all as intended to work by the simple-minded British who devised it, it achieved its main object, because it removed superfluous pi-dogs and deterred tonga-drivers from thrashing their ponies: in a word, it prevented cruelty.

However, on one occasion in 1946 a Muslim S.P.C.A. man fell out with a Hindu S.P.C.A. man over which of them was justly entitled to the blackmail from a tonga-man considered to be committing an act of cruelty (probably he had done nothing except refuse to pay the little fee of the extortioner): religion being then an issue much in the air, they transferred their quarrel to political grounds: they appealed to superiors: superiors appealed to other superiors: the Hindu subscribers and the Muslim subscribers became acutely infuriated with one another: and the end of it was a political row: and since then the S.P.C.A. has collapsed.

This incident is, in its way, a miniature of the political history of India upon Partition—a history the Police will no longer be able to stay. The Police itself has always been a fine Service in India, with much of the spirit of the Army, recruiting also, in the Punjab, from all three creeds: it has however, as far as the Indian policeman is concerned, tended to perpetuate the Mogul or Oriental tradition, and the British Police Officer has always striven to extirpate or at least to mitigate this tradition, and to see that law and order are preserved without extortion, corruption or brutality. Punjab policemen are smart, large, courageous men, of a cheerful and efficient disposition: they have great *esprit de corps*, and put up first-class teams and sports records: if any sort of Indian be convertible into the sort of policeman who is the friend and helper of the public, like the British and Irish bobby, it must be the Punjabi. But the whole philosophy of policehood is different, as this very ordinary little incident will serve to show.

One day I was driving along the Mall with my friend

THE UNDERLING TAKES THE KNOCK

Patience Anand, when a closed van tore out of a side-road across our noses, swung and skidded madly to the right, and overturned.

At once there were shouts and yells and out of the upper windows of the van clambered some men. The driver was a police-sergeant, a Sikh, who got out of the cab unhurt, as also the man alongside him : then they set to work loosening the doors at the back and extracting the other men.

There were about twelve men involved : only one was hurt. This man was pinned down inside. They finally hoisted him up through a window, and he sat on the upper side of the van.

Patience stayed in her car, but I had gone up to see if there was anything I could do. We had two or three of the senior H.S.C. boys with us and they came up too.

The wounded man had a broken leg and was badly bashed about : he was bleeding in the shin, so I covered the wound with my scarf and instructed the boys to make sure what the men intended doing. It appeared that the van was a police van and all the men were policemen, and they were going to telephone at once for an ambulance, so all was well and we went off, the boys piling in behind.

Then they began to laugh at something they had heard.

"What's the joke?" I said, for I did not follow Punjabi at all.

"Why," said Pritam Singh, "that dirty sergeant was telling the wounded man that he was not to let out he hadn't been driving, and he was to take all the blame."

"What's the point of that?" I asked.

The boys thought me very slow.

"Why, he was the driver," they said.

"But he wasn't driving, he was in the back of the van! Why should he take the blame?"

To the boys it was straightforward and all as clear as daylight.

"I suppose the sergeant oughtn't to have been driving," said one boy.

"In this country, only drivers are supposed to drive," said another.

"The sergeant wishes to avoid punishment," said the third.

"Are you quite sure you heard right?" I asked.

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"Did the sergeant really say that?" asked Patience.

The boys had all heard it.

"So what will you do?" I asked.

This was a facer.

"Do?" said the boys. "Why, what can we do?"

"Report it!"

"That wouldn't get you far," they all agreed to say. "You'd have to report it to the Police, wouldn't you? And they'd never do anything—the sergeant would see to that. Why, they wouldn't punish a sergeant when the driver could take it."

The boys were, of course, quite right: you wouldn't get far by reporting the misdemeanour of one Indian policeman or police-officer to an Indian superior—they'd settle it privately, by a bribe or threat or other adjustment of an equally crude nature.

Very good, thought I: I'll spike this. I asked the boys if they would stick to their statements, and they said they would, though they could not see the sense or significance of standing up for justice to an unknown and probably worthless underling. It was fantastic to the boys—right in the abstract, of course, but fantastic in fact.

So on getting home I wrote out a statement of the incident as I had seen and heard it, and in the evening took myself round to the house of Tom Souter, a police-officer whom I knew.

"Tom," I said, "I got involved in the smash-up of a police van on the Mall this afternoon, and here's a statement if you're interested."

"Ah," said Tom, "just what I wanted: I'm not satisfied about it."

He next listened to the main point, the sergeant's instructing the driver who wasn't driving to take all the blame.

"That's it!" he exclaimed. "That exactly makes it all fit. I knew there was something he'd hidden. What a bloody ass Gurbir Singh is: one of my best officers, too."

It appeared that no policeman may drive a police van except a police driver: the sergeant had broken this very strict rule for the joy of driving, and had driven like a fool.

"What would have happened to the driver, if he had had to take blame for the accident?" I asked.

POLICE NICETIES

"Dismissed from the Force, and relegation to his village."

"No chance of coming back?"

"None whatever. A policeman's first offence is his last."

"Would the sergeant have helped him, having wrecked his career?"

"Extremely unlikely."

"Wouldn't the ex-driver blackmail him?"

"If he tried, Gurbir Singh would squash him flat." (Indeed many ways of ruining a peasant are available to a policeman!)

"Aren't the others sticking up for him?"

"No fear!"

"Well, what will Gurbir Singh have to suffer?"

"I'll degrade him, but not too much: but first I'll put him through hell, and put the fear of God into him, by saying the case must go through the civil courts, and we can't defend him, and he'll have to take a civil sentence."

"And will it go through the civil courts?"

"No: I'll withdraw it at the last and we'll deal with it in our own court."

"Well, will you want me or the boys to appear?"

"No, no: now I know what the truth is, I'll jump it out of them."

"How?"

"Oh, I'll go to Gurbir Singh and tell him he might as well tell the truth, as it's leaked out from passers-by and all the others are talking. Then they'll all talk. But I'm sorry: he's one of my very best. I wouldn't have thought it of him, but I'll see he gets the right medicine, and it'll be the making of him."

And so it all fell out. There was (so I learned later) a great reckoning between Tom Souter and Gurbir Singh, who implored and wept and said he would never live down the disgrace: to which Tom said, that if he took it properly, and did decently, the men would respect him more than before. This was far from being Gurbir's view: face lost stays lost for ever. He might feel in his heart that the other course was right, but he had not been brought up to be a Christian. But Tom put Gurbir Singh through it properly: and the end was repentance and amity, and as Tom said, a good thing all round. Tom Souter certainly loved his men, and they and the Service

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were the pride of his life : and they loved him, and he was the pride of theirs, and all of it was genuine.

As for me and my boys, I told them this sequel : and they were puzzled, and a little thoughtful, and not particularly interested.

From experienced colleagues, English and Indian, I was able to discover the career of a book competing for a place on the Recommended Book List of the Education Department. Out of a field of three or four score entries, printed at the risk of author and publisher, the Department chooses a dozen books which are recommended to all schools, and the schools usually prefer to make up their reading-matter from the Recommended List. For five years this list holds, and the author may make as much as £2,000 or more. Once the book is printed, a copy is sent to each member of the Selecting Board, and then develops a pause in proceedings, of unpredictable length. To understand the working of the Board, it is necessary to have an idea of Indian Education.

The Education Service was the first to be Indianized, and has been becoming more and more thoroughly Indian in character since the many years ago that it was turned over to Indian control. The Indian Government, under pressure from the India Office at home, itself under pressure brought to bear by "liberal thinkers", decided that Education was the "safest" Service to hand over to Indians, that is to say, they thought it the least important and least explosive. The result has been that standards have gone down in a crazy spiral, for each teacher likes to point to his own success, which he may conceive to be the best served by his passing all and sundry, or by ploughing candidates wholesale—generally by teaching too little and then setting papers unrelated to the teaching. Students march out of examination halls on strike because they think the papers too hard (they march out by prearranged action, and one does not know if this is with, or without, a preview of the papers). Teachers are bribed by parents : they are also personally threatened by parents for failing sons or daughters. Previews of examination papers are commonly sold by printers : professors seldom add to their reading : the main object of all students is to get an official label with a

BRIBERY IN ACTION

money-value : to be brief, Indian education takes the primrose path of progressive lowering of all standards. The result has been to fill Indian cities with a half-baked, i.e. literate but uneducated, intelligentsia, discontented and a ready prey to any gospel of a revolutionary kind :—so perhaps, since all action is the outcome of thought, or lack of it, this was in fact not the least but the most explosive Service to Indianize prematurely.

However, to return to the Selecting Board : it consists of the most highly-placed, and therefore most honoured, Professors and other members of the University and Department. The Board is neither appointed in rotation, nor does the same set of senior men function till removed by retirement. These gentlemen jockey ruthlessly among themselves for a place on it. The Board having at last appointed itself and the books having been circulated to them, there develop the mysterious pauses mentioned before. When it is thought that things are getting really fixed, a new “hitch” occurs, and the publisher appears further harassed : something very unfair but, it appears, unavoidable is going on. One hears that it is “not a bad Board”. Its members are “fairly reasonable, most of them”. Or some are “very difficult”. A goodish book, a hot favourite, is suddenly cast aside : the publisher grows very nervous : will his own venture be suddenly thrown out ? Has “the necessary” (a favourite Indian euphemism) been adequately done ?

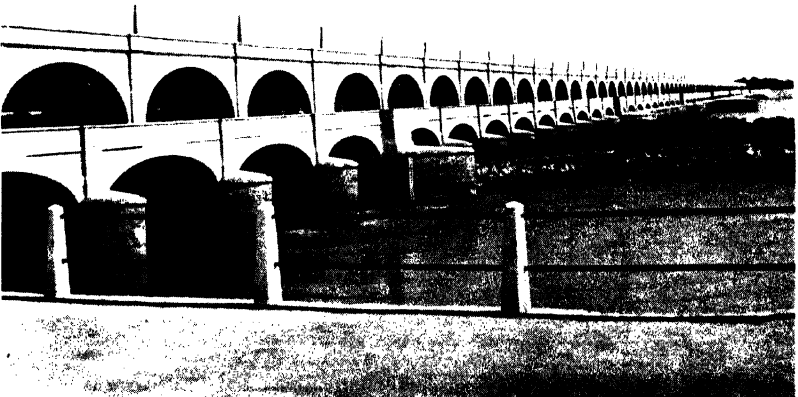
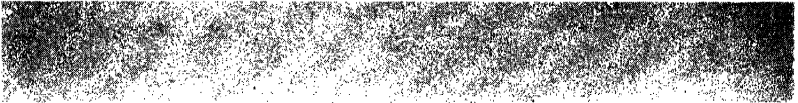
The answer is, at each turn, bribery. It has to be nicely done, in due form ; it is of course “nazar”, “gift”. Members want to be on the Board, because the “gifts” accruing are substantial. Hence the preliminary jockeying. All the delays are occasioned by adjusting the “gifts” : all the shortening and lengthening of the odds on the books depend on the favour with which they are viewed, which depends on the “gifts” received, and the suitability of their size : a “reasonable” member is one who demands less, a “difficult” member one who demands much. Books fall out suddenly because a publisher and author come to an end of their purse, or patience. Of course no publisher approaches a member direct : there are “friends” who do this delicate work, and I suppose they have to be squared too. These publishers’ expenses do not appear

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in the accounts. I was assured that in spite of the system, a good book could not actually be kept out, and a bad book could not actually buy its way on to the List. I have written all this in the present tense, to describe what used to be habitual procedure. There is no evidence to make one suppose that Pakistan and Hindustan have abolished these methods.

The peculiar views of the English being known, English authors were not expected to help find the necessary "gifts". They were expected to be like the Three Wise Monkeys rolled into one. That was the least they could do, in return for acknowledgment of their peculiar views—for few Indians believe the British objected to corruption, they believed we simply, in all fields, being in a winning position, preferred the cheaper path of refusing to pay "nazar": it was considered that we were exceptionally astute in covering our tracks, so as to be in a position to refuse to pay "nazar". Few Indians, I think, for example, ever realized that State gifts given to British Political or Civil officers were not retained by the officers, but remitted to the T'osh-i-Khana in New Delhi, where they could be looked over and bought for a fair price by private persons, the money so taken going either into the Indian revenue, or to charity. In these matters, Indians considered us hypocrites, but since on the whole we were in this particular apparently successful in our hypocrisy, they tolerated it, for they are always most tolerant of success. In fact they would only have liked to master our supposed art.—Now that the great Services are withdrawn, the Englishman in India is an adventurer again, and it rests with his private conscience and his sense of ambassadorship as a Britisher, whether he also takes to corruption or not.

My new publisher friend, Mr. Vijay Chopra, was an extremely pleasant man. His father had built up a business inherited I believe from his father, and the two sons now carried it on. Being an honest firm, they were not in the first rank of wealth. The two brothers were a pair of tall, jolly men, in their late thirties or early forties, both graduates of Lahore University. They spoke excellent English. The English of Lahore is a wonderful achievement, for very few of the Professors or teachers are English. It is spoken without



WHEAT, THE WEALTH OF THE PUNJAB. MODERN REAPERS ARE DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH, OWING TO THE SMALL HOLDINGS THAT RESULT FROM THE PUNJAB LAWS OF INHERITANCE

WATER, THE LIFE-BLOOD OF THE PUNJAB. THE SUKKUR BARRAGE ACROSS THE INDUS, CONSTRUCTED WHILE SIR HENRY LAWRENCE WAS COMMISSIONER OF SIND AND OPENED BY THE VICEROY, LORD LLOYD. IT CARRIES A MOTOR-ROAD AND A RAILWAY. THIS WATER GIVES LIFE TO SIND

MY INDIAN PUBLISHER AND FRIEND

much of that peculiar Indian stress or accent, for Punjabi speech is nearer Persian in its intonation. Educated Punjabis are proud of their English, and were never very keen on reverting to either Urdu or Hindi, as those tongues have not the vocabulary for modern studies.

One brother did the literary side of the business, the other did the management of the press and the men. They were very proud of their business. The press was typical—the type all hand-set, each letter picked out and slipped into the line by hand, and the press itself of the simplest kind. The amazing thing was, that the typesetters were unable to read Roman lettering. They picked the type purely by knowing the look of the letters. I believe they knew the names of the letters : but they hadn't an inkling otherwise. Most of them were illiterate ; but one or two could read the Urdu script used in Lahore. The whole press, offices and all, would go into a cottage ground-floor.

My new friend had a nice wife, who unfortunately spoke no English, a pretty daughter of fourteen or fifteen, and a young boy. He was intensely keen, like all modern Lahore people, on getting them a really good education. The mere sight of Punjabi children makes one long to open dozens of schools and staff them with the best procurable teachers : for I never saw such excellent material ! They are the sort of children one longs to handle—naughty, long-legged, lively, full of sense, and not obnoxiously clever.

My publisher was a Rotarian, in fact he was Secretary to the Lahore Rotary Club, and he invited me to speak at a forthcoming celebration. Two other ladies were also to speak. The occasion was therefore, in a small way, a pioneer event. I was most interested to accept.

The Rotarians were a fraternity of Lahore business men, all having one main idea in view : the building up of “ sound ” business, by which they expressly meant business as honestly transacted as possible, and as liberally transacted as possible, and they had their eye on a world outside their own family and their own land. These leading merchants were well aware that Indian business methods are bad for Indian business. There was a distinct feeling of freemasonry, in the good sense, about this lodge. Indians are desperately imitative : but there was

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something alive and original here. These men were not merely being led : they were going of their own accord.

I looked round the gathering with interest. It was about one-quarter or one-third Muslim : most of the members were Hindu. Sikhs were few. About a half or a third of the men had brought lady guests, wives or otherwise. To have a lady guest was obviously creditable and a matter of importance : it was an act of emancipation. They were unmistakably prosperous. They represented steelworks, cotton mills, shoe factories, and all sorts of shops and trades. They were very familiar and cheerful with one another. They were large, talkative, full of Punjabi smiles and laughter ; they were distinguished. They wore well-cut clothes and wore them well. The dinner was very good. No alcohol was drunk.

All pursued a settled course : minutes, reports, a bit of discussion : finally the speeches. My remarks came first, and went off all right. The Polish lady had much difficulty and not much to say : she read her speech. The Turkish lady, who looked like a European, as so many Turks do, set out to give a woman's description of reforms in Turkey. Her speech was excellent. It was clear, from the attention and applause, that her remarks went straight home : she hit a subject upon which all present entertained the strongest possible feelings. That subject, of course, was the emergence of women into society.

She presented a clear and vivid account of how the women of Turkey had been obliged to discard the *burqa* : " They were not forced to appear in public," she said, " but they were forbidden to appear covered up." She described their extraordinary and fervid advance into responsible work, and the remarkable results, both in the characters of the women personally, and the character of society in general. She did not mince matters. She ended with a bold and undisguised appeal for the same event in India.

The results were most interesting.

The Hindus would have liked to cheer their heads off. But in view of the wifeless Muslim men present, they restrained their enthusiasm, in order not to hurt feelings. The Muslims applauded, but a little shamefacedly. I don't recall a single Muslim woman present, but I dare say there were. In talk

PUNJABI BUSINESS CHARITY

afterwards, the Hindu comment ran, "Splendid to hear that said. Just what we need a lot of. If only our brothers would bring their wives out and educate them we'd all begin to get somewhere." Unspoken, the thought ran, "We want the women out. But if we produce ours for them to enjoy their society, they ought to produce theirs for us."—Where had I heard that expressed in words before? In Bombay, by Parsis, twelve years ago apropos of the there non-appearing Hindu ladies.

There followed a thing called, I think, an American Auction. The father of one of our boys, a very big man who looked the exact replica of Matheson Lang the actor, auctioned a signed programme. He was a wonderful auctioneer, jollying and bullying the bidders with a truly Punjabi humour. The bidding ran up to an extraordinary figure—several thousands of rupees. I am not sure of the system, but I think the top bidder pays the sum bid and those who have entered pay their share of the final bid. It was, of course, for a charitable object. Excitement ran high. It was a point of honour to risk your bid, and it was a nice judgment to insert your bid at the exact spot dictated by your generosity versus your caution, and your desire for kudos against the known standing of your business—for the bidding might stop with you. Some men hurtled in with reckless good humour: some of the richest men skinflintedly stayed out, and were remorselessly beaten up by Matheson Lang, and much laughed at by everybody. The last bids of course lay with the merchant princes. My friend kept me apprised, "He can't afford that . . . He ought to come in higher . . . He won't risk anything . . . They'll never get him in . . ." If I remember rightly, the programme went for a bid of about *five hundred pounds*, with the other shares to be added on. The object would be decided on later.

I asked my host—knowing the difficulties of India—whether it would be difficult to round up the cheques. "Oh," he said, "they'll all pay up in the end." They would certainly lose face if they didn't!

Soon after this interesting evening, he informed me that the plans about the proposed textbook were now ready. He had arranged for me to collaborate with a Muslim in the

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Educational Department. This gentleman would supply the local *cachet* of distinction, while I supplied the coveted English distinction : he, who was himself a writer of very distinguished little Urdu tales, would supply me with material and keep me accurate, while I supplied the text and what my imagination and experience could contribute. We were to produce a set of quite fresh Indian stories. Muslims have an excellent taste in literature, being brought up on a sound Persian and Urdu classicism. The manner is more set and the matter more formalized than with us : but anyone trained in the Western classics of Greece, Rome and France has much in common with another trained in the Persian classics.

I looked forward to the work. It was a job after my own heart.

CHAPTER 6

A MUSLIM FAMILY HOLIDAY

THE Muslim gentleman with whom I was to collaborate was Mr. A. B. Javid, Vice-Principal of a College in Lahore. Mr. Chopra took me to call at his house.

Mr. Javid was a tall, thin-faced, aristocratic-looking man, with a most charming and gentle manner. His English was perfect. He had been a student in England and had worked in Baluchistan. We concluded an arrangement by which, as soon as term was over, I was to join the Javids in Dehra Dun.

On the way to Dehra Dun, I passed through Amritsar and through the heart of the old Sikh kingdoms. Amritsar, a city of somewhat tragic memory, is not remarkable, except that it is the Rome of Sikhism. On a former occasion I had seen the famous Golden Temple. This temple lies in a great enclosure, walled and paved, and is built upon the old traditional lines for a Hindu fane of the north-west—upon the same model, that is to say, as some of the ancient ruined temples of Kashmir. It lies like a little gem of marble and gold in the middle of a great square tank of glassy water, and is approached by a delicate flat marble bridge with a fretted balustrade and gold finishings. Shoes must be removed at the precinct gate, or overshoes put on. Sikh religious hospitality takes charge of the visitor from the entry: everything may be seen and is eagerly shown. Inside the Temple, which is richly painted, is nothing but the Granth Sahib, the Book of the Gurus, and of this a non-stop reading is day and night in progress: when one reader reaches the end of his time, he rises reading, and the man taking over settles himself reading from the word of the other—there is no break of delivery. Opposite the bridge is a Convocation Room, where the chief elders of the Sikhs—a sort of Senate—meet for discussion of policy or reform: and here are shown various relics of past heroes and events—swords, portions of clothing, books. Outside the precinct is one of the big enterprises of Sikh charity, supported entirely by voluntary contributions: a great sort of hospital or inn,

A MUSLIM FAMILY HOLIDAY

for the nourishment and shelter of pilgrims, and the succour and support of the sick. The kitchens are vast and clean.—In all this, Sikhism has inherited greatly from the pure form of the Hindu religion : Sikhs are really showing that religion as it should be, in the proper form from which Hinduism itself has long apostatized. This is why Hindus who do not find their religion satisfying so often, in North-West India, patronize Sikh worship. The Sikh character is one of bewildering contrast, having on the one hand this aspect of benevolence, and on the other a hot-headed, reckless belligerence. Its most admirable and constant characteristic is its uncompromising non-idolatry.

As we ran eastward, the country became more and more markedly Hindu. It is this region, stretching also a long way south, which is properly BHARAT—that name which is scattered all over North-west India as “ British ” is with us, applied to banks and all sorts of undertakings. The real centre of Bharat is the city of Muttra : this is the historic area where the war of the Mahabharata—the Great Barats—was fought. It is Jat and Rajput country, and it is this name which has been taken for Hindustan. The people are fine upstanding folk. The name Bharat is actually the same name as the BRIT of Britain, which also was first known (to the Phœnicians) as Baratana, the original BRT people having, like the Sakas but at a much earlier date, branched west and east. However this is not the place to go into that very curious ancient history. At the holy city of Hardwar—very obviously Hindu, very dirty, with windows caged with strong coarse wire to keep out the plaguing bands of holy monkeys—the train turned north for Dehra Dun, which was at no distance.

Dehra Dun is in the foothills below Mussoorie, and is not in the Punjab. It warms up, but permanent ceiling fans are never installed, which is to say that the climate there is temperate. I found all the family assembled in a cottage-bungalow that was a sort of annexe to a larger house opposite.

Mr. Javid's wife was a delightful woman. She was not in seclusion, and was a kind and excellent hostess. She had much charm, and also quiet strength of character. In person she was of medium height, rosy but olive-skinned. There were three children, Nurjehan, a lively girl of eighteen, Manzur,

NURJEHAN AND BABIES

a boy of sixteen, and Rafiq, a complete rogue of twelve or thereabouts. Nurjehan was taken up with a passion for babies.

"Babies," she said, "dozens and dozens of babies. I am going to run a home for babies."

"What sort of babies?" I asked.

"Nice babies, lovely babies," replied Nurjehan.

"But nice people will stick to their nice babies," I objected. "It'll have to be a mission-home for miserable lost babies."

"I don't mind," she said. "Little babies. Not over two years."

"But they'd grow up," I said. "What will you do? Get rid of them?"

"Babies are so *sweet*," said Nurjehan. "Rafiq was a lovely baby—such a lovely baby."

"You'd better marry and have your own," I said.

"Faugh!" said she. "A *man*! I hate men!"

"Surely you don't hate your father and uncles and Manzur!"

"Oh . . . no. But I hate men, I hate them!" and Nurjehan laughed. "I won't ever have a husband—just dozens of babies!"

Manzur listened to this argument with much brotherly teasing and hooting. Manzur's mind was entirely taken up with Science, which he intended to make his career. He was a nice, long-limbed, humorous boy, and looked like a Persian.

Rafiq was a great sorrow to me. He was a fat little chap. "He eats nothing but rice," said his family; "now we don't let him eat rice. Look how horribly fat he's got. No rice for you, Rafiq, you're turning into a fat Bunnia." He was a born comedian, and what is more, he uttered such strings of drolleries that his family, who tried not to spoil him by laughing, could not help themselves. And alas! it being all in Urdu, I could not understand any of it. It wasn't merely what he said, it was the way he said it, and it was not merely his family who found him funny, but strangers: it was not wit or jokes they could translate, it was pure drollery. However, the look of him was enough to make you laugh, with his podgy person, and his cropped hair sticking up on end, and his grin, and his gestures, and his rolling, snapping dark eyes.

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The family was completed by a large wolf-hound and a white samoyed that had been smuggled to them out of Persia, for few are allowed to possess them and they may not be sent out of the land. This little dog was the embodiment of dancing delight. This family obeyed the Prophet's injunction : having dogs, they kept them well and treated them as persons.

The larger house opposite was inhabited by a younger brother of Mr. Javid's, who worked in the Government Survey Department. I was soon introduced to the family, whose habit it was to have a reunion once a year, during the holidays. It was several days before I sorted them out : only one of the ladies spoke English.

First, there was the father. He was a snowy-haired old patriarch, tall, rosy-cheeked, and dressed in white. He took no part in the social life of the family, except to be president, but sat on the verandah in a deck-chair every afternoon. He was very courtly, and unmistakably a thoroughbred gentleman. He used to look in on gatherings, smile, and go away. His sons treated him with extreme respect. He had been in Government service. He was, I think, proud of and pleased by his family : he had that benignity that comes of a full life well lived : now he was retiring from life, thinking out his experience, preparing to discard the body. This behaviour is typically Indian, and quite often to be seen : and it is admirable.

Then, there was a lady of his generation, but younger. I have no idea where she fitted in. Perhaps she was a sister of his. She had not married till late in life, and then she married a widower, and was now a widow. She was a kind creature, and I felt at home with her, she was so like my " Parsi Aunties " in Bombay.

The son to whom the house belonged was a neat, quiet man, married to a most charming young woman who spoke English. She dressed prettily, in modern materials, and was responsible for all the pleasant house and its appointments. Her conversation was delightful. This couple had a little boy of about three and a half. He was a most brisk and determined character. He had two passions in life, his gumboots and his small black umbrella. He had once been soused, and never

MUSLIM FAMILY GOES FOR A WALK

wished to be soused again : hence his armoury. When he spoke it was dictatorial. He was regarded as a perambulating joke. Our family once took him for a "walk", but he was determined it was to be a carriage-drive. Nurjehan and Manzur pushed him by turns : Rafiq wanted to, but as it was well known that his idea was to overturn the push-carriage and contents, he was not allowed. Nothing would induce the child to walk : every time it was suggested, he raised a fierce bellow, which he switched off as soon as he knew he had won. He sat in his gumboots with his umbrella up, firmly clutched in both hands. In this fashion we did a small round, finally passing a ditch in which I saw some ducks. The boys obligingly shooed the ducks towards us, and the infant, in a lordly manner, rose to his feet, stood upon the ground, and testified great pleasure in the ducks. While he was not looking, Rafiq seized the push-carriage and galloped off into a wood with it. We had to get off : but no, our young master wished to stay. He also wished to possess a duck. Expostulations. Suddenly the loss of his vehicle was noticed. Upon this, he forgot the ducks and concentrated on the major issue with a tremendous but quite tearless howl of rage. Rafiq was to be seen afar off doing a fandango with the push-carriage in and out of the trees. Nothing would budge the brat an inch. The carriage must come to him. And come it eventually had to, and Rafiq let off a volume of angry retort. Undisturbed, the Lord of the Universe mounted, complete with ever-open umbrella. I don't remember his name : I called him either the gumboot-wallah or the chhatri-wallah (umbrella-fellow), which did just as well.

There was also a third brother. He was a doctor from Delhi, and in face strongly resembled the late Franklin D. Roosevelt, but was taller. His wife was perhaps not so polished as the rest of the family. He had a little girl of nine, with lovely long curly hair, as pretty as a little doll, "only we think it's a pity she's so brown," said Nurjehan : a really beautiful child, and with a full share of the family's mischief and fun. There was also a little fat boy, a sort of understudy to Rafiq. These two little cousins often came over to eat with us, being accommodated with Rafiq at a babies' table. The smaller children were never allowed to eat with their

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elders, till they were old enough to eat daintily and behave well. There was much quiet discipline in that family!—The chief joy of the youngsters was to cry “Shoo! shoo!” under trees to make believe there were tree-rats up them. The dogs were very obliging and ready to believe anything that was a good excuse for a bark. Often there really were tree-rats—little striped squirrels—and they scolded back “Chrr! chrr! chrr!” and jumped from tree to tree, and below ran the barking dogs and the children, “Shoo! shoo! shoo!”

To return to the Doctor: he had a very fine modern clinic and nursing home in Delhi. He was an interesting and most attractive character, full of talk and reflection, very much in revolt against the seamy side of human character, very much of an idealist, and a man of philosophical imagination: but he gave issue to practical work.

“I see so much that is hateful in my profession,” he said. “The other day I had an old Hindu in, very ill: he could not live. His son behaved in the most filial way, was with him every moment possible. I was really touched. I thought I was seeing something truly good at last. A devoted son. He was with his father in his last moments: he did the last things for him, and when all was over, he left. He was less stricken with grief than I expected, I must say.—But, it hadn’t been quite the end. The old man suddenly came to life again. The first thing he did, was to feel under his pillow for his cheque-book. It was not there. The son had made sure of that, and taken it. As soon as the old man found it was gone, he started to shout and curse. He called his son a thief: he said he knew all the time that that was all the son was after—his banking account. He cursed and cursed his son . . . he died an hour or two later.”

The talk came round again and again to the future of India, and the character of India. They all deplored the exacerbation of communal feelings. “It’s a thing we’ve never known in the Punjab,” they said. “Hindus and Muslims—we used to be friends—in and out of one another’s houses: it’s all done by the politicians and the papers. If you people insist on going, of course we’ll have to have Pakistan.” And then that inconsistent bit that was nearly always uttered sooner or later by a Muslim, “But if the Hindus won’t grant us that, I’ll take

BRIBERY AGAIN

up a gun myself and shoot if I must . . .” Always the same India! No man you ever know is your enemy, but you are ready to murder the abstraction. Then—riot. How opposite are the tribesmen, out for their blood enemy, the one man, and no conception of an abstraction.

Then, as ever, up came the boggy-issue of India : corruption. This family was dead set against corruption : they saw it for what it is—rule by fear, favour and money. These men had never taken a bribe in their lives, and stood out against all giving of bribes : they belonged to a gallant and unlisted, but active, band of Indians who are out to defeat corruption. Muslims are always sturdier on this issue than Hindus, because of the uncompromising teaching of Islam on usury, and the attitude to wealth, which is regarded not as a thing to amass, but a thing to be enjoyed while it lasts. Muslims have no wish to be exceeding rich : a decent prosperity and an honoured end is what they ask.

It was this Doctor who told us the tale which was the last of the collection Mr. Javid and I were steadily concocting. I did the writing, and he did the editing, and then, when we had the typescript, we both worked out the necessary notes to the text. We tried all the stories on Manzur and Nurjehan and Rafiq, for whom his father translated them as he read. We called the Doctor’s tale “ ‘The Toymaker’s Village’ ”. “I like it so much,” he said, “it is such a truly Indian tale.” Perhaps it will come out over here one day.

Dehra Dun was a very green, lush place, the sun was hot and the rain fell for two or three hours every day : the chhatrwallah’s umbrella and gumboots were not unjustified ! The rolling foothills rose steadily behind it from the 1,500 feet or so of Dehra Dun, to about 2,500 feet. Behind that, in and out of the shifting cloud, was the wall of the Himalayas, rising to 7,000 feet on a base of about three-quarters of a mile. On a rainless night, you could see a necklet of lights, so high up in the sky that you had to tilt your head to look at them : those were the lights of that most fast and fashionable of hill-stations, Mussoorie.

Manzur was sent up on the responsible job of finding family accommodation there, and he came back rather pleased with

A MUSLIM FAMILY HOLIDAY

himself. I admired the confidence of his father, and the sense of responsibility of Manzur. While he was away, we went one evening for a car-drive and picnic at the foot of the big hills, and walked about. It was Hindu country, as you could tell by the little white steepled temples on the tops of hillocks : about half the population was a rather poor variety of Hill Rajput. They were easily to be distinguished, both by the fairness and independence of the women-folk, and the sort of decent two-storeyed house they built for themselves, as different as could be from the squalid shacks of the lesser peasants. But they were nothing like the taller, stronger Rajputs of Rajputana. Mussoorie, so my host's family assured me, being in Hindu country, had become the chosen hill-station of all well-to-do Sikhs and Hindus—a sort of Sikh-Hindu Punjab-from-Punjab. Most of the Sikh and Rajput princes had country houses there, and set the tone in fashion, expense and pace. Mussoorie, to the old hand at India, connoted one of the oldest, pleasantest if rainiest, and most chic European resorts : but now Europeans were so scarce, and Mussoorie so expensive, that they were hardly to be seen there.

We walked a couple of miles of the gentle downhill way home, and I found myself ahead with the elderly lady. I became venturesome, and began to attempt speech : she was so kind and encouraging. Her English was even less adequate than my Urdu. We believed ourselves to be getting on very well, and to be understanding all sorts of things : but in time, having rather exhausted our vocabularies, we sat down and waited for the others.

They came up. Each in our own language, we announced that we had had quite a chat : with dignity, there being smiles on all the faces.

“ Ah,” said Mr. Javid to the others, “ we were quite right ! I said, ‘ They must be conversing : look how they are waving their arms about ! ’ ”

The ladies' conversation, for the most part, revolved round the topics of children, the husbands, the homes. Nevertheless it was not uninformed talk, neither the vapid chatter of the West, nor the still worse conversation of the secluded

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Indian woman, whose talk is gentle but lacks topics. The talk of those ladies was rather leisurely, amiable, full of shrewd interest, and interspersed with humour.

Though the homes were their occupation, they also watched the world and shrewdly summed it up : they regarded it as the men's sphere, but still their business, and within their ken.

The atmosphere was one of good manners and good breeding ; and though their children were never touched or harshly addressed, and were allowed all reasonable liberty, they quite definitely had an unpretentious place in the family, and both kept themselves in it, and were kept in it, to everyone's complete ease and satisfaction, including the children's. I think one of the main items in this strong but unobtrusive discipline was that the small children were not allowed to eat with their elders. They were expected to be children, not little grown-ups : and the children admired their elders, and were shy of them. They were looked on as delight and blessing : but they were not therefore spoilt : they were not considered to be angelic, but to be gently directed and corrected. Very different is the average Hindu attitude to children, one of slavish indulgence to the little tyrant sons, and of alternate petting and education in slavishness towards the little girls ! Every Hindu boy considers himself all-licensed : every Muslim boy is taught to respect his patriarchal elders. Every Hindu girl looks forward to a life of serving men : every Muslim girl looks forward to a life as a man's mate. Modern Hindu girls however are tending to be less submissive nowadays, and many is the hopelessly unenlightened and enslaved Muslim wife and concubine. The attitude of servants is always illuminating : in general, Muslim servants respect their masters ; Hindu servants seldom respect theirs. Still, on the whole, while the Hindu ladies turn out much the cleverer, the Muslims, if educated, turn out much the more cultured, and very much the more useful in character.

Once, I remember, the whole family seemed to have evaporated. I found them all in the kitchen : cooking was in progress, and special dishes were being concocted for a special farewell evening meal. Everybody contributed some effort or other. Cooking is often done like this. In India there is no question of things being served at a given moment : they

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are thoroughly overcooked in any case and kept hot or reheated, or are cold sweets. Everybody cooks, male and female, Muslim and Hindu : it is the woman's job, but the men do not despise to know how. It is not onerous, and is regarded as amusing and not demeaning. But the preparation of raw materials is left to servants, and washing-up is considered lowly and avoided. In all kinds of work, India works on the principle of dividing tasks wherever it is in any way feasible : so unemployment is almost unknown : the chief object in life being a lazy existence. Few people do, or wish to do, a full job or a full day's work. Only the despised artisans and the peasants work like that !

Only once do I remember the ladies' talk turning on fashions. Indian life is happily almost free of this folly. There are a few set styles in women's dress : nowadays some Western materials are occasionally used for saris or kurtas : that is about all. On the occasion I recollect, the talk was upon the wearing of Lucknow trousers. This trouser has a great frill below the knee, and gives the appearance of a long skirt. It is very graceful and becoming, more dressy than the salwar, and sometimes made in fine printed calico or satin. It is less convenient than the salwar, because it trails on steps. At the other extreme, is the tight-legged Rajput Jodhpur trouser, often worn by Muslim girls. There was some talk of yardage and derzi's charges. And that was all I ever heard on the sacred subject of fashion! Lucky people.

The time came, however, for us to go. It was sad to say good-bye to that pleasant Dehra Dun family. In spite of their entire modernity, one felt strongly that their whole life rested on most ancient foundations, was an expression of something very old, like the latest smile on a well-known and beloved face. Muslim life is not inclined to outside sociability as is the Hindu : for the Hindu looks outside for his marriages, while the Muslim marries in the nearest possible cousinship, preferring even a wife older than himself, to going further out. Hence, if the family has any purity of breed or tradition, it is maintained : and the whole family life rests on a conception of respect to the elders, and respect towards God, and a faith in His watchfulness (which is often distorted into lazy acquies-

SUPERB HIMALAYAN ROAD

cence in "fate"). The life is not indulgent, nor is it ascetic : good things—food, marriage, children—are to be enjoyed, within law, with dignity and without distortion. The life of such a family as this I seemed to see stretching back, generation upon generation, now in this land, now in that, from the hubbub of London or Bombay to-day, to the tents and tall houses of Arabia : always the same life, with changeful expressions on its strong countenance. I was grateful, and I felt honoured, to have seen that life in the living.

In a day or two we migrated up to Mussoorie, leaving behind all the Delhi and Dehra Dun members of the family. We went up to Mussoorie, servants, dogs and all, in a family bus. The road is famous for making people sick.

Hitherto my mountaineering in a car had been in Switzerland, and in the Dolomites. Those roads are considered marvels of engineering, and I had always been led to understand that in road-building the Swiss, Germans and Italians unquestionably led the way. However, the scene of Switzerland and the Dolomites is to the Himalayas as an edifice of toy bricks to the Keep of Windsor Castle. Here we stood at the bottom toll-bar and craned our necks looking up green bastions of bush-grown rock that went almost vertically into the air a thousand or two thousand feet at a time, scored by nearly vertical clefts a quarter of a mile deep. It staggered the imagination to think of trying to build a road on such a phenomenon. Even goats cannot manage anything but a few of the gulleys. However, off we went. It was a pleasure to realize by degrees that the palm in road-building must after all go to our own countrymen.

It was a magnificent macadam, of easy width, with a sturdy stone coping, never at all steep, winding unpredictably like a shoe-lace in and out of the incredible mountain-side, turning the inner ends of the gulleys in sharp V's. In almost no time we were high above the foothills, which began to look as flat as a green eiderdown, and beyond slowly came into view the sharp ridge of low ancient hills around Hardwar, and beyond that, ever rising and extending, in proportion as we took height, the vast, blue-green, perfectly flat plain of Hindustan. It was so flat, so unending, that it looked like nothing so much

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as an ocean : farther and farther and still farther it stretched, and then there came into it the silver snaky shimmer of some immense river : the Ganges. Immediately beside us, the mountain ran almost vertically downwards, but wherever it formed a rounded bastion, the slope levelled out in little fan-shaped fields, earth-dyked and so each outlined in dark brown : these were a vivid emerald green and fanned out one from the other like the feathers on a peacock's breast. These hung out, six, eight, or ten at a time, till they struck the top of a precipice, and the last ones were outlined sharp against the soft bluish-green eiderdown of the foothills two or three thousand feet below.

These were rice-fields, watered solely from the monsoon downpours that broke on the mighty breast of the mountains. The heavy clouds roll in from the south-east at three or four thousand feet and, striking the ramparts, break in pouring rain. The rain instantly hurtles off the ribs and ridges, runs in cataracts down the gulleys, reaching the foothills in a few minutes, and from a mountain wall a couple of miles wide is rushed into one of several funnels, rolling down rocks and boulders like marbles, crashing through all but the most strong of viaducts, and if those withstand the onslaught of smashing stones and water, soon the arches are choked, the river goes over the top, stones and all, and the viaduct becomes a dam. On tears the gigantic spate, in a channel cut a quarter of a mile wide and a hundred feet deep in the soft foothills. These spates never run for long—seldom for even a few days—generally only for hours, and they come down sometimes like eagles, and woe betide you if you are caught crossing the wide waterless bed when the water comes. Then on, slowing up in flatter land, leaving pools behind : and by the time one spate is dying into the distant Ganges, the next is hurtling down the hills.

What a road ! so endlessly resourceful, so various, so incredible, so extremely strong, built as we build our asphalt main roads in Britain.—Anything less permanent would be dissolved by the monsoon rains. I began to realize that if the mountains of Europe are child's play to the Himalayas, the most famous of the roads upon them are child's play to this road-building.

VERY IMPERMANENT LANDSCAPE

We arrived, doing the last mile on foot, for no cars are allowed in Mussoorie. Mussoorie, the Punjab-from-the-Punjab, has become the summer playground of well-to-do Punjabis, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu, who fill the place with energy, chatter, movement and colour. In Mussoorie you may walk, ride a pony, or go in a rickshaw drawn by coolies. There is every kind of shop and place of entertainment. It lies upon six or seven long crests; nearly every house is at ground level on one side and, except in favoured spots, the ground floor is pinned up on pillars over a twenty-foot drop on the other. The paths generally have an eight-foot bank on one side and a ten-foot drop on the other, and one path or another is perpetually caving in and "goes down the khud" and occasionally houses do too. Before I left, the last lap of the motor road was totally blocked by a lump of rock as big as a Sherman tank going "down the khud". Luckily it only rolled fifty or sixty feet—indeed I think it slid rather than rolled—and being square, it stayed upon the road, which it blocked all but two feet. Had it broken through the parapet, it would have gone down two thousand feet, and there were a couple of swallow's nest villages in the way. The rainfall is so heavy, and the first folds of Himalayan rock so compounded with loose earth, that all is fundamentally unstable.

Manzur had been very clever, and picked for us half the ground floor of a hotel. The arrangements were characteristic of the country. The furniture (not including mattresses) is supplied. You supply cook, cooking-pots, plates or metal trays, table linen and bedding. All India travels with a *bistra*—a wadded cotton quilt done up in a cotton mat called a durry, and pillow or sheets if you are particular. This you spread out on the charpoy, which is an Indian bed having a wooden frame and a mattress of cotton webbing, which can be easily unstripped and washed, or drawn up tighter if it gets slack. Cheap charpoys have string mattresses. Indian quilts are of ample dimensions, it being the universal habit of India to sleep completely en-cocooned.

We now settled down to a life of alternate downpour and squelch. It rained for about four hours at a time, twice or three times in the twenty-four hours. If the rains lifted at

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midday, the most wonderful effects unfolded. Behind you, northward, would emerge the towering true Himalayan chain, fifty or seventy miles off, snow-crested, generally a sullen slate-colour below the snow, but sometimes a pansy blue, and sometimes bodiless altogether—sky above and sky below, only white snow crisp in the sky : you would think it a cloud, but it is so still and so sharply peaked, it cannot be a cloud . . . there it hangs in mid-sky, like a dream of snow. Southward, out run the sharp green-brown spurs below you : the foothills are invisible, for we lie back : and beyond the last trees you can see, for miles and miles and miles, green as an emerald and blue as a sapphire, stretch the Plains—the ocean of the Plains, threaded by that silver lace—till the blue merges with the blue sky a hundred or two hundred miles away.

So great are these immensities, the eyes beholding them, the mind is stilled.

Presently the quite invisible hotel management put up curtains dividing the central hall into two : another family had taken the other half of the ground floor. The first floor was inhabited by a Rajah. We never saw the Rajah or Rani, who were wealthy, but they possessed a baby, which was being brought up as a Modern Indian Baby, that is to say, surrounded by all modern baby-gadgets, and on a hygienic plan, and dressed *à l'anglaise*. This was a very large, fine, rosy baby, and Nurjehan thought well of it. Modern Indian Babies are spreading rapidly. Unfortunately the modernism, externally so striking, never by any chance includes discipline : all Indian babies are consistently indulged. As a result, the grown individuals are rather free from inhibitions, but they lack the moral strength to do what is right or good but disagreeable.

The other family arrived. They proved to be Hindus, evidently well-off. By degrees, we established the family as a tall, large young man : a tall, stout, young-middle-aged mother : a delightful girl of fourteen or so : a boy of fifteen or sixteen.

Conversation on both sides of the dividing curtain was politely muted. However, when it is wet, and the main amusement in life is talk, people cannot go on talking in

RAFIQ AND LUDMILA

sepulchral tones for ever, and presently Rafiq began to pipe up in his customary style. He was told to talk more quietly. However, he got off into one of those long series of remarks that I shall never cease to regret I could not understand. As usual, the family tried not to encourage him by laughing : as usual, it failed. Not only that, but evidently one of the Hindu family was sitting next the curtain, because the curtain began to shake in an unmistakable tempo. Clearly the curtain could not be suffering from suppressed laughter. Rafiq proceeded in his discourse. There came a stifled snort from beyond the curtain (evidently the young man's) and someone withdrew hastily and shut a door. Our family noticed these things : Rafiq's eyes began to twinkle more, and he looked at us interrogatively and jerked his head at the curtain, and wound up his remarks and suddenly grew shy. The curtain ceased to vibrate and two people on the other side galloped out on to the verandah and giggled outside. And who should the lad next door turn out to be, but one of my brighter boys from Aitchison, Mohan Chand. That of course made things easy.

Mohan was a comic youth, very fair, with large eyes like green gooseberries. He had a broken front tooth, thanks to a hockey-ball. He had imagination. He probably had brains. He certainly thought he was wonderful. He had a perfectly idiotic sense of humour. He was extremely nice.

He soon made friends with Manzur, and Ludmila with Nurjehan. Nurjehan was young in her tastes, and Ludmila very sage, and they spent hours drawing ideal Indian beauties, in profile, decked as brides, both gentle and peasant. Nurjehan became inspired and produced a super-bride, and Ludmila went into raptures over it.

Ludmila was the ideal young Hindu maiden—or so I thought. She was very pretty, oval-faced, her smooth brown hair parted in the middle and done into two long pigtails, ending in swinging woollen tassels. She was, like her brother, very fair. She had perfect teeth and a sweet smile, indeed she was altogether delightful. She had a long and slender, fluid figure. She was quiet, but spoke charmingly : very shy, yet never awkward and never out of place. Her manners and breeding were perfect. She was already a good cook, and when I sprained my

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ankle, she massaged it so skilfully with hot mustard oil, that she got it right in two days. She was, in her quiet way, very gay, ready for anything, and quite eager for mischief.

Mohan's mother and elder brother decided to ask us all to tea, before my departure. She was a very nice lady, very rosy, and the brother a pleasant person, with a very fine clear complexion, rosier than Mohan. The tea was an immense spread, some of it consisting of the sort of small iced sugar *pâtisseries* Indians love, and the rest cooked by Ludmila and her mother—delicious semi-savoury small things of infinite variety.

It is always curious, at these mixed gatherings, to sense out the topics which are tabu. Roughly speaking, they were exactly the burning topics of the day : politics and religion. My presence added a third : the British. Individuals who are really friendly will willingly talk about all these subjects with one another, privately ; otherwise we all skate gracefully round these difficult matters. It is sad : for it brings a wary tension into almost every occasion, and often confines talk to the trivial or abstract.

There is another point that arises. With Muslims, one feels at once a certain quality in common : books, or at least the possibility of books, and all they stand for. A cultured, well-mannered Muslim is almost certain to have a literary streak somewhere in his make-up. With the Sikh or Hindu (Brahmans apart) you feel yourself in the company of people who, however civilized and well turned out, have certainly not that literary streak. There are exceptions both ways—hordes of horribly illiterate Muslims, many Hindus and Sikhs addicted to literary pleasures. I do but generalize !

Mr. Javid's conversation was always a pleasure to listen to. He had a rare sense of English words. Indeed, he had taught in England. He had a connoisseur's sense of words : and I can only imagine, his English being what it was, his Urdu must have had great distinction of style. In this he was typical of very many Muslims I met, who upon provocation will air an Urdu so high-flown as to be almost Persian (" Oh," said Latif to me of Lady Abdul Quadr, making her speech at an Islamia College prize-day, " she's talking very high Urdu, I can't understand half of it ! ")—and will compose and compare poems for pleasure, and start swapping quotations and

A MUSLIM REFLECTS UPON HISTORY

capping quotations from Persian classics with an enthusiasm and love peculiar to true scholars the world over, be they followers of Horace or Hafiz or the Chinese collections.

Mr. Javid was full of interesting matter. He told me how he and his wife went travelling in Afghanistan—an unsafe country—and not unnaturally found themselves in an awkward situation : but as soon as the Pathans learned of his status—a teacher of distinction—barriers were down at once, and they could not be too attentive to the pair. Of course Mrs. Javid's non-seclusion was rather shocking : but she was so dignified and friendly that the men she met began for the first time to see the possibilities of unsecluded females. From others, too, I heard of the respect felt in those wild parts for a teacher of Mr. Javid's tribe.

Mr. Javid told me, when I asked him, that his family came of a tribe akin to the Prophet : his family was in fact of Arab blood—as you could see from the family features—and others of the clan had never left Arabia. His family had gone from Arabia to Afghanistan long ago expressly to teach there. As with so many others I met, he felt strongly that India was not his land and not his home, and he was always hankering to throw up India and return to Afghanistan or Persia. But a good living is not to be had easily in Afghanistan, and Persia is not nearly so civilized or so advanced as optimists like to make out. Indian Muslims are however always wishing to visit Persia, or have actually done so and are happy. Mecca is the pilgrimage of the religious-minded : Persia of the cultured.

Mr. Javid expressed exactly what many another Muslim tried to say to me.

"I congratulate you English," he said, "on not having made the mistake we did. You have never settled in the land. You always go home on leave and get stiffened up, and in the end you go away altogether. We ought to have done the same : preserved our place of retreat."

"You couldn't very well do so in your times," I said, "what with local wars, and routes of communication being so hard to keep open."

He shook his head and drew on his huqqa : the coals in the chilm glowed red, and the smoke bubbled through the water.

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He smoked a pipe every day after the midday meal, and one in the evening.

“We should have administered from the hills,” he said, sadly and bitterly. “But instead we stayed down in the land. It is fatal.”

CHAPTER 7

KASHMIR

DEPENDING on your route, you spend one or two days threading through the stupendous and cataclysmic fore-hills of the Himalayas, a wilderness of immense valleys, shaly shifting mountain, crazily up-ended strata, gloomy gorges : and at last, as on a jewel lying in secret in rumpled bedding, your eyes light upon the famous Vale.

Many have described its lakes and brooding peaks, and I will mention only the strange thing that struck me.

The European look of this valley grew moment by moment. All the way up from Pindi, halt by halt and village by village, the architecture of the houses, without changing in any essential from the city model, apart from the pitched roof, came to appear less and less Indian, until by degrees one was looking at a plastered house of two floors, with a carved wooden balcony, and great eaves to shoot the snow, which, with a running vine here and there, might well have been part of a scene in Tirol or Switzerland : but we were on a main road, and I put this down to the influence of European building at the hill-station of Murree.

However, as soon as we emerged from the long gorge of the Jhelum into the lower end of the Vale proper, something very different at once caught my eye. The gorge, being for the most part too narrow and steep for habitation, in effect cuts off the Vale from the outer world. In the villages stood tall houses, three floors high, with big regularly-spaced windows, steep roofs with great eaves : also great tall plastered barns, with ventilation-pillars at the ends of the gables, and huge thatches. I had seen the dead spit of these before, but in Austria : and it was decidedly disconcerting to see good-class family houses of the Austrian type, and barns on the model of the Rhine-country, in a state bordering on India. The first few houses I put down to Europeans ; but as house followed house and barns appeared galore, I had to give up this idea, for the English have not colonized Kashmir.

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Enquiries brought the answer, that this was ordinary Kashmir country building.

Then other things appeared. Houses were built with the first floor hanging out on great beams, in a timber framework, exactly as we built them in England and Germany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Many houses were built entirely of wood, in style just like Austrian houses up the mountains, the same decorative gables and all. But if you peered inside, the mud floors and squalor told you at once that you were still in India, or near it. Pilasters were elaborately carved, with wreathed designs, with heads and faces, exactly like our old Elizabethan carved timbers—but there was after all a difference: for here the acanthus-leaf was a commonplace, and this classic motif hails from ancient Greece. And again, there was a trick of hanging an object—it might be a sort of carved wooden bell, or lantern, or bobble—under the corners of a roof: and the style of these curious decorations was Tibetan. Doors were carved in two panels, like Elizabethan doors, but not like our modern doors: windows had shutters, exactly like Austrian and German shutters, though often more ornate.

One might think that those doors and shutters can be put down to Western influence, but the idea has to be given up at once, for here, on the way up to Gulmarg, and in Gulmarg bazaar itself, are houses finished with ornamental corner turrets (all in wood), with the roof running up into a spire, and topped with a little tin pennant: all the roofing of fine wooden shingles: and those houses were modern, and native-built, not at the behest of any European. In fact it became clear that such details were Kashmiri. Gulmarg also boasted a modern temple. It was squat and square, of whitewashed plaster, and surmounted by a tin spire with a pennon on top. The last time I saw a thing like that, it was a shrine in the Dolomites.

In it all, there was something that worried me and eluded me. Some queer detail, like an eyeless eye socket, or tongueless mouth. . . . Suddenly it came to me. Every window, every attic mansard, was devoid of glass: shutters, yes, but never the wink of a pane in the native houses.

I looked forward with much interest to seeing the famous

EUROPE IN ASIA

city of Srinagar : but the last thing I expected was that it would look as it did.

We entered it by a curving, wide street, built a couple of generations ago : and this street was in black and white timber, and if you had taken it up bodily and placed it down in Wimpfen or Vézelay or Ludlow, the inhabitants of those old towns would have been pleased to own it. This was sufficiently surprising : but the building over the bridge really made me stare. For there, on the right hand, was apparently a German Rathaus, complete with four spiky turrets and a high pitched roof, three floors high. The roof, being of rusty sheet-iron, looked like red tiles and completed the illusion. I don't know what the purpose of that building was.

Then I looked up the river, towards the Old City. There, as far as you could see, stretched old houses—all half-timbered, with overhanging storeys, their feet in the water—so strangely like the antique water-front of Strasburg or any other ancient Germanic city : and, down to the right was another set of four turrets round a central spire, all topped off with spikes and balls. This, improbable as it seemed, was the great Mosque. It was the most unmosque-like mosque I had ever seen !—yet not older, I suppose, than the mosque above Baramullah, which is like a Tibetan shrine, and the one on the Jammu road, which has a shingled onion-spire like the churches of Russia and Austria.

Exploration of the old city only reinforced those impressions. Just as the villages were built on no plan, so the city was on no plan : streets and alleys were a chance maze, the houses being built at any angle according as the builder had chosen to place it. You followed a snaky course in and out and under houses with overhanging storeys, houses with tall flat faces and no windows on the street—or only high up—houses with mansard windows and lucarnes in the high roofs—but if you went in at one of those strong street doors, inside would be a charming sunny courtyard, with weathered wooden balconies running round, and a few boxes of bright flowers, or the sun shining through the green leaves of a vine—the very self of Alsace, or Tirol, or some old Norman town. You couldn't get away from it : this place belonged to mediæval Europe—to be exact, it belonged to Germanic Europe. With

this difference, however. In Europe, even if you go right back to the Middle Ages—to a town like Riquewehr, for example, which has only one building later than A.D. 1500, and that a small post office outside it—or Eguisheim—or any town of that sort where both the people and their ways and homes are as they were five hundred years ago—you are consorting with thrifty people who save their manure for the vineyards, who make it a matter of pride to keep the plaster and thatch in good repair, the woodwork in order, the whole place in a state of self-respecting furbishment. But here on every hand the plaster is cracking off the bare daub, thatches go on till they fall in, the woodwork is neglected, nothing is spent on upkeep or appearances, there is seldom glass in the windows, the atmosphere is one of slovenly decay and advancing dereliction, and the water-front that so reminds you of Strasburg or Colmar is ready to decompose and crumble into the river. It is queer, this unmistakable likeness and the remarkable difference.

If the houses and villages were so like Europe, what of the people? This side of Kashmir—Kashmir proper—appeared to be inhabited by three sorts of people.

Firstly, the fewest—the famous race of Kashmir Brahmins. These are the priests of the Hindu religion.

Secondly, very numerous, the ordinary Kashmiri, a Muslim, and apparently of a rather degenerate Punjab stock. These people are artisans, craftsmen and agriculturists.

Thirdly, and numerous, the herdsmen, mostly Gujars, I believe—a rough and not bad-looking race who live on the mountains in a rather commodious sort of dug-out shack.

The Kashmir Brahmins are an ancient and remarkable people. They number only three or four thousand. They are the *fine fleur* of the North-western Indian Pundit. They have preserved the Hindu religion in perhaps its purest form. They are virtually monotheists, followers of Siva to the practical exclusion of other divinities: and they really provide the fountain-head of punditry for the Punjab and the hill-states of Hindu India. Their only rivals in India—to whom they are unrelated—are the Brahmins of Puna, above Bombay. Brahmins in the Plains will nearly always turn out to have

KASHMIR BRAHMANS

gotra-names which take them back to the Kashmir hills : Pundit Nehru—to go no further—is a Kashmir Brahman of the *got* Nehru. Hindu families, of Khatri or Bannia caste, have not only branches of Brahmans to serve them in the Plains, but if they go to Kashmir on holiday or pilgrimage, they will find other branches of the same Brahmanical *got* claiming them as sheep of their appointed flock.

These Brahmans are intellectually extremely able and astute. Their occupation falls into three classes : those that serve temples and places of pilgrimage and pilgrims—these are regarded as necessary but as holy parasites ; those engaged in civil administration ; those engaged in trade. In the Plains, apart from the few engaged in religion, they nearly all are to be found in administrative or secretarial posts, their ability in this direction being developed through centuries. Kashmir contains perhaps the most ancient of ruined Hindu temples, some on the ancient cruciform plan, some showing Greek influence. These Brahmans, though so few, are of ancient establishment in Kashmir ; it is in their name that Kashmir is claimed for Hindustan. It should be however remembered that the people of Kashmir are all Muslim. You might as well claim all Britain for the few dozen practising Druids who still dwell in our midst.

The Kashmir Pundits are easily identified on the streets. They wear large turbans in delightful colours—salmon, primrose, orange, coral. They wear a coat, and generally the ruched, close-fitting trouser, or else European dress. They are one and all redoubtably intelligent in expression. They seem to be of a cheerful disposition decidedly marred by superiority, suspicion and covetousness. In person they are tall, slender, well-made, and in complexion vary from a slight tan to English fairness, their eyes being generally grey or grey-green or hazel.

It was the Pundits' wives, the Punditanis, who astonished me. A certain quarter in the Old City of Srinagar is the Pundits' quarter—all old timber-frame houses, of course, and an occasional high garden-wall with a vine-trellis on top. The Punditanis come and go up and down the streets as freely as they like, and seem to spend much time marketing and calling. They are the most perfect figures you could wish to see among those

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old houses, for they are the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Europe come alive. They wear a long robe in some bright colour—emerald green, red, blue—having wide sleeves, turned back with a broad cuff in a contrasting colour, and in the side of the skirt is a slit pocket edged with a broad band of this contrasting shade. The dress is girt in with a white woollen rope whose tails hang down. On their heads they wear a great muslin coif, pinned back under the nape, and hanging to the waist behind, and through it you see their long plait of light brown hair. On their feet they have cloth slippers. They are extremely clean. Up and down they go, singly or in pairs, fair and pretty in the face, stopping to gossip for a moment in a group of three or four.

Among both the Pundits and the Punditanis, I was struck by the frequent occurrence of faces which can only be described as perfectly English in type—I mean that rather long bony face, with deep-set eyes and a long well-cut nose and thinnish well-shaped lips, which is the commonplace of Wessex or Scotland. It was a face you met with all the time in the Punjab, of course, but here you met with it in its own natural fair colours. How strange, the ramshackle European houses, and those quite displanted English-looking men and women . . . transplanted, but . . . how many centuries ago?

Most of the rest of Kashmir is Muslim. The ordinary Kashmiri is a country fellow (unless he is an embroiderer or other craftsman), remarkably dirty, wearing a red conical cotton cap, indescribable clothes of a trousered variety, a blanket over his shoulders and string-soled shoes on his feet. His face is ruddy or slightly tanned, his eyes hazel, his features un-Indian. His wife is an olive-skinned rosy woman, often remarkably good-looking, wearing a shirt and pantaloons—occasionally a skirt—her head covered with a fuzz of cloth, and in her ears half a dozen earrings as big as bangles. She looks like a gypsy, and both she and her husband would be quite at home in the Balkan landscape.

Kashmiris are a very poor people. They are amazingly gifted in charming arts—wood-carving, embroidering, lacquer-painting, the making of textiles, embroidered rugs and jewellery. It is true that they have been the victims of a rapacious

KASHMIRI DISHONESTY

ruler and of an extortionate and conscienceless administration : but even so, the reason for their poverty lies in their own character. They are grasping, thriftless, feckless, arrant cowards. But chiefly the Kashmiri is the most childish and indefatigable swindler on earth.

He tries to sell you mushrooms for a rupee a basket : they are worth six annas, and as likely as not he parts with them for three. He enlarges a gold ring, when he has agreed to cut it and put in more gold, by scraping it out till it is paper thin : thus he hopes to sell the ring, save the gold, and make you pay for more—of course he loses the sale. He makes wonderful carved furniture : but of green wood, so when it has stood in his shop six months, it yaws at the seams and becomes worthless. He makes lovely rugs : but the dye in the wool, guaranteed fadeless, goes off in six months, so if he does not sell soon he loses the sale. He sells you a numdahah-rug for solid Yarkand wool felt, when it is wool over cotton : it wears out in a season : so in subsequent seasons you never go to his shop again. He sells you the famous Kashmir honey, but it is immature : you eat it, fall ill, and do not deal with him again. Travellers become so suspicious, that often the sellers get less than they themselves gave. Withal, shameless as they are, they are a good-humoured lot, and if you can forget the unpleasantnesses and concentrate on the scenery only, take your rogues as rogues, and rejoice in the rare honest men, Kashmir may be enjoyed.

This dishonesty plagues Kashmir from top to bottom. At the bottom is the guileless shepherd of the hills, who tries to make out your dog has killed a yearling lamb that certainly looks rigid and its eyes are shut : he says this lamb is worth fifty rupees : it is worth fifteen : and his story is only spoilt by the lamb's ill-timed return to life. At the top of course is the Ruler : below the very top is the Administration—the entirely Kashmiri Administration.

You bump into the Administration at all points. Our washing-water did not arrive in the jugs. Why ? Because the woodman-waterman has been carried off by the police. What for ? You cannot believe that that humble timid soul has defied the Law ! (Or what is called ' Law '.)—Because he has, it appears, unlawfully felled a tree for your firewood. The Forest Guards caught him at it.—This is physically

impossible.—A message comes from the wretched malefactor : he is in prison—he is being *chelan'ed* (beaten up) : he cannot pay the fine. So you have to go and get him out. The whole thing is a pack of lies. There never was a tree. He never gathered anything but fallen wood. He was not caught in any act. The point is, that the police want thirty rupees. In the end they get five : and the fine will not go down in the fine book, but into the pockets of the police. They will repeat the process when they judge it profitable.

Or the man comes about your electricity, which is State-owned. Last year he assessed you at ten rupees. This year it is thirty. What you consume is (perhaps) twelve or fifteen rupees' worth. But it is no use to try either to discover what is the truth, or keep to it if by chance you discover it. That would lead to all sorts of breakdowns in your line, costing much more than ten rupees to repair. The agent this year, then, says he assesses you at thirty rupees. If you don't pay him ten for a bribe, he will enter it as thirty. If you pay him ten for a bribe, he will enter the assessment as ten in his book. You don't bribe him yourself : your cook " talks with him ". If the cook gets him his ten, he will give the cook (who is also a Kashmiri) one rupee rake-off. All told, you pay twenty.

If your occupation is running a club, or a hotel, or a business such as tweed-weaving or embroidering, furs or furniture, on an export scale, this principle will operate, but on a bigger scale. All posts are regarded as power to make pickings. " Pickings " is the wrong word : unless it can be applied to the juggernaut operations of a reaper-thrasher-binder in action. The peculations of a French or Italian customs-official or tax-gatherer are as the efforts of a helpless babe, to the wholesale and vulpine extortions of the Kashmir official. The podesta of Gulmarg is suddenly shot out of his office and a new one comes. There is no secret about the reason : it is because his exactions became uneconomic—little sharks must always remember to leave a good mouthful for the bigger sharks and the top shark. A Minister is removed from office overnight. The reason is the same. Every man in a post, whether it is in business or in administration, has above him a man he must square, and below him men scheming ceaselessly to get his position. From top to bottom, it is a skin-game, played with



A MOHAMMEDAN MILITARY POLICEMAN. HE HAS HAD SMALLPOX. BUT HIS HUMOUR SURVIVES UNIMPAIRED



A SIKH MILITARY POLICEMAN. A VERY TYPICAL
TAT COUNTRYMAN

VALOUR OF THE KASHMIR ARMY

every faculty on the stretch. Among the ordinary people, one may laugh for the sake of their fecklessness. But as played by renegade Muslims of intelligence and the ultra-astute Brahmans of Kashmir, it is the most hateful spectacle on earth. With the one exception of the horrors of Hindu religion on the Eastern side, Kashmir in this presents the essence of India at its naked worst.

As to the cowardice of the Kashmiri, I was told the following true tale of a few years back.

The Kashmir Army, at that time commanded by a loaned Englishman, consisted entirely of Dogra Rajputs from Jammu, who are born fighters. It was decided that Kashmir must also contribute.

So men were recruited, and a very fine second half was got together. From the back hills, Kashmir produces men of excellent physique: good stuff for soldiers, as far as appearance goes. For six months the men were trained outside Srinagar. They made a grand showing. Their officers were extremely pleased with their handiwork, including the English colonel in command.

When the new troops were fully trained, it was decided that they should march over the Banihal Pass down to Jammu—a big operation. The spirit of the new Army was keen.

The day arrived, and the hour arrived, and the order to march was given. The town turned out to see the great event.

Somehow the movement didn't begin. There were enquiries. There was dismay in the ranks. Yet it did not seem to be mutiny. The men could not be moved, and the reason finally came out. Where—the New Kashmir Army wanted to know—*where was the escort to see them safely over to Jammu?*

My way out of the Vale of Kashmir, at the opposite end from my entry, lay over the mighty Banihal Pass at the head of the valley. On the Banihal Pass, the road goes over nine thousand feet, a tunnel taking it under the final shoulder of the mountain. For a last moment you may look back, down four thousand feet of giddy mountain-side, and see the Vale

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spread like a fairy carpet below you. If you have come up by the Banihal, that moment of emergence is blinding, like the gate to Paradise. Thus the old Imperial retainers of the Grand Moguls saw it, devilling slowly up from the hot plains : the garden of Kashmir. Farewell, the lakes and little palaces, the poplars and the river-beds, the pure snowy pinnacle of Nanga Parbat, the Naked Youth, the broad blue brow of Haramukh, the Face of God !

Through the tunnel, and down we plunge for miles, and up for miles, and down and down for miles, on and on. The road has been much revised and re-built. There is never a real view : on this side, it is all a tangle of deep valley, and great mountains which it takes more than a day to cross, even by bus. Here and there is the outbuilding of the old road with its steeper gradient, that was suitable for mule and horse and cart and coolie traffic. It was built just like this one : and it is disquieting to see how it has vanished but for a quarter-mile here and there—as if an artist had rubbed it out of his sketch : or as if the mountain had stirred in its great sleep and the building fell to nothing, like a fleck of dried mud falling from the flank of a sleeping elephant.

Jammu is not like Kashmir. Though in this province the Muslims are in a sixty per cent majority, the character of the country is more visibly Hindu. The people are unlike both the Punjabi and the Kashmiri, though akin to both. Features are good, but the type is much darker, the build slighter and stockier. One gets the impression that these people have lived in these parts much longer. This is true : for till just before Mogul times, the Vale of Kashmir was too snow-filled to be habitable : climate has changed. These people are, in fact, mostly Hill Rajputs, Dogras : they belong to that earliest settlement of Indo-Europeans, and not to the bigger-built Punjab peoples, who entered India only at the beginning of the Christian era, or later. They do not build in the same way : the style is more Indian. As soon as you land in Jammu City, you land in a city close akin to Lahore, yet acutely different by virtue of its Indian nature and its Hindu holiness

CONDUCT OF A TEMPLE BRAHMAN

(expressed in a large and celebrated temple with golden roofing and tawdry and hideous idols).

Up-country in India there are no hotels, but you may seek out the rest-house and for a fee make use of it.

I went round the great temple with my Muslim servant. There was no ill-feeling: but had it not been for me, he would never have got inside the gate, and had it not been for him, I should have been allowed into the central court. So I only saw the outer ring of gods. I don't know what is inside: no doubt a phallus of impressive dimensions. All was swept very clean, especially the great inner court beyond the grille gates. We were taken round by an old beggar, a degenerate Brahman—I say 'degenerate' because temple-keeping is considered one of the less reputable occupations among those open to Brahmans, who know well that idolatry and the cozening of the mob are not good pursuits. This old man looked quite benevolent in himself. On parting at the completion of the tour, I offered him a tip: and at the same moment the little crowd of beggars in the gate came up, headed by an old crone. The old man, with a lordly gesture, waved aside the tip. This astounded me: a scorn of cash is not natural in India. I therefore asked whether I should fittingly give the tip to the old woman: was that his kind wish?—his wave had seemed to indicate the horde, as much as to say, "To them: I am above it." The old woman, like a monkey, snatched the money out of my hand. My guide's civility vanished: he was furious, and expressed himself with violent malice. I was surprised. My bearer Ramzan began to grin.

"Miss Sahib," he said, "he too holy take your money from your hand. You put money down, he pick it up."

I put a second sum on the dirty beggar's pavement. The holy man, with no false dignity, seized it quick before anyone else could get it. The spittle-stained paving was less filthy than I, the non-Hindu.

There being nothing else to see in Jammu, I went and spent three hours in the rest-house.

It is above all the Hindustan-Pakistan quarrel over Kashmir that makes a powder barrel of North-west India: though, at

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that, it is simply a manifestation of Hindustan's aggressive and unreconciled attitude to the existence of Pakistan.

I will try very briefly to outline this tangled dispute.

The Ruler's claim to Kashmir is not ancient. His ancestor, an adventuring Rajput, paid a sum down to the Indian Government of the day in order to have his claim confirmed. In those days the region was too remote and inaccessible for the British to undertake the ordering of it, and they needed the money, and to have it brought to order.

The leading Kashmir population is a Punjabi Muslim stock that has immigrated from the Sialkot region. Where the Gujars came from no one knows. Kashmir is about 98 per cent Muslim.

The 40 per cent Hindu minority of Jammu is a Dogra Rajput stock long established and of noted courage.

Kashmir was administered by the tiny group of Brahmans (or Pundits) of which stock is Mr. Nehru, Premier of Hindustan. Sixty country carts could transport them and their goods out of Kashmir, back to Jammu whence they came.

Before the exit of the British, when Mr. Nehru was raising trouble for the British in any way he could, he visited Kashmir and fomented revolt against the Ruler and to this end he backed the efforts of Sheikh Abdullah and denounced the Ruler as an unrighteous man and unrightfully ruling. He said that Sheikh Abdullah, a Muslim, was rightfully the candidate to lead the Muslim people to a Muslim People's Democracy. (With, of course, a Brahman-staffed administration, as hitherto.) No Indian Muslims reinforced this bid, and Kashmiris took little interest: it was a mere political manœuvre.

When the British withdrew from India, a gang of irresponsible Pathan tribesmen irrupted into Kashmir. Pakistan called them off. Their compliance was tardy, and the Hindu Maharajah fled and appealed to Nehru and Hindustan for help.

Sheikh Abdullah, who only wished to secure himself in power, and whose claims to revolt and leadership no reputable Muslim had ever endorsed, also appealed to Hindustan. For this he was viewed as a quisling by Pakistan.

Pandit Nehru now declared that the Ruler was a good man

RIGHTS AND WRONGS IN KASHMIR

and rightfully ruling and his accession to Hindustan valid and Sheikh Abdullah also a good man and true. Pandit Nehru had no difficulty in arranging this change of tune.

Hindustan deployed troops into Kashmir and managed to occupy the Vale before Pakistan could move up her troops. Pakistan occupied the entirely unprofitable hills. To maintain her Army, Hindustan spent vast sums of the Indian taxpayer's money constructing a road from Pathankot to Jammu.

Indians of Hindustan do not attempt to argue that Hindustan has any good moral right to Kashmir.

What they in fact say is, "We can't let go of Kashmir now, because Mr. Nehru has spent such vast sums on maintaining the Army and building that road. We can't go to the taxpayer and say, 'All for nothing!' If we did that, I am afraid the Hindu populace would rise in Bharat and leave not a remaining Muslim alive."

This is not a moral argument, but a threat of violence.

We must recall too, that in the case of Junagadh, a Muslim ruler opted for Pakistan, having a Hindu population: Hindustan marched up her Army and her warships stood in and the State was annexed to Hindustan. In the case of Hyderabad, a Muslim ruler called upon Pakistan, having a majority Hindu population: Hindustan fought a campaign and annexed the State to Hindustan. Here in Kashmir a Hindu ruler, ruling a Muslim population, opts for Hindustan. The people wish to go to Pakistan. In justice, they should.

I don't know what sort of principles or consistency Mr. Nehru considers he has shown. I know what I should call that record: I should call it a record of power politics, an exhibition of the most brazen and twistiest opportunism.

And what would be a just solution?

It would be just to allot Kashmir to Pakistan, and to give the Brahmans of Srinagar a week in which to go. They have done nothing for Kashmir, and would be better off with their co-religionists and clients.

It would be fair to give Jammu to Pakistan (seeing Muslims are in a 60 per cent Majority). The Dogras have got on perfectly well with their Muslims up to date, and they could go on getting on with them: or they could clear out if they preferred.

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Pakistan needs Kashmir and Jammu : Hindustan does not, she has plenty of hill resorts. Hindustan wishes to encircle the north of Pakistan. Pakistan needs control of her own headwaters : the Jhelum runs out of Kashmir, the Chenab and the Ravi out of Jammu.

CHAPTER 8

CREEDS AND PRACTICES

AS on the material plane, the Five Rivers and all the network of canals are the life of the north-west of India, so the life of the spirit of India is religion. And in India, as elsewhere, the great rivers that keep alive the spirit have dried up almost to nothing; little is left but the forms of the dry river-beds. India has, however, this advantage over the desert west: religion is still the frame-work and the texture and the reason of her life, and the spiritual life is universally admitted to be of essential importance, and material life to be essentially unimportant.

Here again, I thought, the Aitchison boys could serve me very well, not to mention the masters and the servants. The boys, fresh from their homes and womenfolk, would provide candid information if anyone could. Religion is always an open book: on the one page it reveals itself by its official practice: on the other, it is revealed in the lives of its exponents. Even where the left-hand page is blank, the right-hand of personal behaviour cannot but be written.

The College provided a very rare practice and spectacle: and I think we all know that whatever the value and disadvantages of the remarkable education it gave its boys, it was in the religious field that the real education of Aitchison lay, and it was there that its most important work was done. And officially it was not done at all.

First, however, let me say that it must not be thought that it is the natural thing in India for Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus to disagree much or murderously about their religions—not in ordinary daily life. The great majority of the people have no violent animosities on the subject. Wherever you had religious pogroms and jihads in the Old India, you might for a certainty put your finger upon a covetous tyrant and his gang-men interested in the first place in securing wealth and empire. Wherever you have religious massacres in modern India, you

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may without any fail seek and find his modern counterpart—the place-hunting politician and the newspaper.

Religion in India is, of course, snobbish and exclusive. The pious Hindu is thankful to be purer than the lowlier Hindu : even the scavenger, at the bottom of the Hindu social religious scale, can despise the outcaste and non-Hindu and animal. The pious Muslim is thankful to stand in the revelation of the True Light. The swashbuckling Sikh has a poor opinion of other truths. The Indian Christians are meekly aware of their superiority to the average Indian. As for the howe-burying Bishnois, and the snake-worshipping Bhowals, and the animist Bhils—no European sect could be more aware of its peculiar entity. It is a population of Pharisees.

All the same, when left alone by their rulers and political gadflies to get on with one another, Indians are more remarkable for a lazy tolerance in religion than anything else. They do not often exert themselves. Hinduism has never been a proselytizing faith : indeed it is a *sine qua non* to chance to be born Hindu : it is a conglomerate of highly divergent beliefs and practices : when the latest invader with the latest religion has been long enough in the land, he finds his god or gods identified with accepted gods, and he and his people are embraced into the Hindu fold. The newcomers may practise as they like, provided they marry in their caste and acknowledge Brahman supremacy. Those that wilfully remain outside are non-Hindu and unclean. As for Islam and Sikhism and Christianity, these are brotherhood religions and proselytizers, and refuse to be swallowed up in the Hindu system : but the first two have long been static or nearly so.

In the Indian countryside, you do not naturally find these religionists at daggers drawn. They do not mistrust or despise one another. They do not help one another, or neglect to help one another, for religious reasons. Talk often turns on religion, and you find Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian all at one in a fundamental piety towards “Khuda”, “God”. They shake their heads over the punditizing of Brahmans, Mullahs and missionaries—those learned vapourings are too much for them : but the will of God they understand. So, with cheerful minds, they turn out and join in one another’s processions : beneath the engaging differences, there is but

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God : life is dull and hard, let us join in one another's fun !

Thus the simple man, who in India is ninety-nine men out of a hundred. The hundredth man is a city-dweller, educated and politically conscious. Unfortunately there are more of him than there are good posts to be had. He is out of touch with nature : he is out of touch with Khuda. His religion is irritating to practise. It is also difficult to believe. But it is turned into a political party—for politics can only thrive on differences of opinion—and he is caught in the vortex of the struggle for jobs and power. His religion is nothing but an observance of differences : his wits are sharp and his covetousness is keen : his hunger great and his desire to toil nil. This man will not join with a child's heart in the fun of another religion. He prefers hate to the fellowship of Khuda. Because if he sticks to the hate and the differences, he stands a better chance of getting to the top. If you pour a ton of wheat out, there is only one top and room for only fifty top grains. If you divide the ton into four piles, there are four tops and room for two hundred top grains.—Long live difference and hate !

I have been generalizing, though I think anyone who knows India will, upon the whole, agree with what I have said. It has to be remembered that Bengal, Madras, and especially Southern India, present beliefs and practices and peoples as divergent as Spain, Greece, Nestorians and Copts. The Punjab also presents a special brand of people and religion : and it is the Punjab we are considering : it is the foundation stone of " India's " future.

The Punjab, from the religious point of view, is characterized by a strong natural monotheism. Here is the bulk of Indian Islam, standing inexorably to the banner of One God. Here is almost the whole Sikh community, seven million strong, standing militant to One God. Here is a Hinduism almost free of polytheism. Here is, also, quite a large and self-respecting Christian community. It is generally thrown up against Christianity that its Indian converts are rifferaff : but in the Punjab is also a substantial conversion from among high-grade Sikhs, and Brahmans and good middle-class Hindus.

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The Hinduism has, no doubt, been tempered by its sturdy competitors : nevertheless, the fact remains, that the North-west Indian is predisposed to think of God as one, and is disinclined to polytheistic practices. They don't seem to him to make sense.

If you go round Aitchison grounds, the Old School and the Barry Block will strike you first. Looking among the farther trees, your eye will be caught by the boarding-houses. Then you will see the white dome of the Mosque. And then you will see the three sikhara-spires of the Temple and the howdah-roof of the Gurdwara. If you look at the School Calendar, you will see noted as general holidays certain festivals of Islam, a number of Sikh Gurus' Birthdays, and some seasonal Hindu festivals.

I believe the Mosque was the first to be raised, being given by a prince : then the Gurdwara : and lastly the Temple followed, not wishing to be left behind. To each was appointed a proper chaplain, and religious instruction was at first left in their hands. This did not work, as each conceived it his duty to poison his boys' opinion of the other flocks. A very typical experience : for village trouble always starts at the same fountain : in India the livelihood of the Mullah or Brahman depends on maintaining differences. So instruction was removed from their hands and placed in the hands of the teaching staff, and every week there was a Religious Period, when the boys consorted according to religion and were taught in turn by masters of their own faith interested in giving the teaching. The masters themselves took pride in the way they got on together : and this attitude they passed on effectively to their pupils.

It was immediately noticeable, that whereas the Muslims and Sikhs really felt they had a torch to hand on, the Hindus felt rather that they had a position to defend.

Over the festivals, another point became clear. The Muslims were proud of their practice and its feasts. They had no objection to us Christians taking part. They did not issue invitations, for no one is refused Islam. They would not have resented Sikhs. They would possibly have removed Hindus from inside the Mosque during prayer. They were, indeed,

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rather like the Pentateuch they accepted: at the back of all their bigotry was something grand and immutable. The little boys, turning out to evening Mosque in their *achkan* coats and fur or felt hats, and clean shirts and *salwars*, had already some touch of the real dignity and light which this faith—however deformed—somehow confers on its followers (“Don’t let Starky jump on me, Miss Prior! Down, Starky!—Please, Miss Prior, I am in my prayer clothes!”—Starky was my dog). There was life in them: you felt that where two or three of them might be cast together, there would be generated a mosque and a handing on of the light received. When you enter a mosque, the most impressive thing—one of the real impressive things in this world—is that absolutely unfurnished edifice and the central empty recess which tells you—God is here: God is real: God is a Spirit.

The Sikh religion is manifestly hospitable. The Gurus’ days (a succession of ten Gurus or Sainly Teachers founded this religion) were always marked by a notice of the time of office at the Gurdwara, and a cordial invitation to all to attend. When you went, you sat on the floor. There was only the Granth Sahib—the Book of the Gurus—lying covered under its canopy: and a huge drum in a corner. The huge drum was beaten. The Book was read—a Book consisting of original reflections, and portions from other scriptures, including the Koran. Prayers were offered, extempore. An address might be given, extempore. Singing to the usual instruments might be given—more or less extempore hymns. The conclusion would be the handing round to all of the *Pahul*, a sort of sweetmeat eaten in token of fellowship, given hospitably also to the lowly and the uninitiated and the stranger. The atmosphere had not that grandeur and formalism which characterizes Islam. But it had an extraordinary liveliness, it was the expression of a living sense of piety and a living sense of hospitality; and the perfectly unembarrassed remarks, in a low tone, were characteristic—“Are you in tune? Sit a bit closer. The song about such-and-such. Ready? Good . . . You’re going to speak now? All right, I’ll take this other song afterwards. What? No. Very good . . .” The humorous turn in the extempore speaking was also not out of place: you are quite free to smile in a Gurdwara.

CREEDS AND PRACTICES

On the whole, you felt that Islam would be glad to have you, if you cared to become a True Believer : Sikhism was ready to show you everything and let you attend everything, whether you believed or not. These two atmospheres are also typical of the religions at large. Sikhism is a beneficent and active religion, and many Hindus do not care for temple-worship and go to the Gurdwaras : as did most of our Hindu masters' wives.

So in the evening, one current of boys flowed Mosque-ward from the boarding-houses : in the opposite direction flocked the Sikhs. They did not bear themselves quite as the Muslims did. The Muslims went in a spirit of discipline, and proud of it : with a sort of soldierliness. The Sikh boys went because they were supposed to do so.

Thus at sundown one current set to the right, the other to the left : and then you became aware of yet a third group of boys, desultory and loitering, sitting about, or perhaps drifting in boredom also to the left, where stood the 'Temple.

And what of the 'Temple ? The Temple also issued invitations to attend its festivals—"all are cordially invited"—the words were used—yes : but no Muslim boy was allowed to set foot in the temple. Anyone but a Hindu was viewed with disfavour. The retiring Principal told me he had had to insist on the right of entry at any hour. There was no need to insist on any such right at the Mosque or the Gurdwara : there was no desire in these to insist on any such right or to keep anyone out : quite the contrary. Further, Hindu boys were forbidden by the Pundit in charge (who, however, had no disciplinary authority) to attend the Gurdwara or listen to the prayers at the Mosque. If I asked them why they did not sample the other places, "Miss Prior, we are not allowed !" It was for all the world like the Reformed and the Romanists in the West : the Reformed are free to worship with any other Christian cult, the Roman Catholic is forbidden to worship in any but Roman form. Again, there is the parallel of monotheism against polytheistic tendency. Taking temples and thoughtful Punjabi Hindus together, I felt as if the loyalists among the Hindus had in their religion some old, fat, queer, flaccid, inert, moribund creature whom they were trying hard

A PUNJAB HINDU TEMPLE

to rejuvenate in order to get him out into a wrestling-ring with the two lean athletes of Sikhism and Islam.

The Temple at Aitchison is without exception the pleasantest temple I have ever stood in : and it is typical of the Punjab. Two particularly likeable brothers, who were loyal in their faith, acted as my guides. They were well aware that a temple like this is a sort of fossil or museum of a religion : therefore they did what all Hindus who think at all have to do—they turned as much as possible into “symbolism”. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is again exactly the attitude of the idolatrous polytheistic Christians of Southern Europe.

There is a pleasant court, with a colonnade at one side : all is spotlessly clean : and under the three sikhara spires are three shrines. These are like little houses, open in front, with Indian Gothic windows at the side, and standing on pedestals. Each little shrine is beautifully carved in alabaster. The left-hand shrine contains the divine members of the great epic, Rama, Krishna and Sita, with the monkey-god Hanuman aloft on the side wall. The three Divine Ones are on a pedestal, being idols about eighteen inches in height, richly dressed in scarlet and gold tinsel. The middle shrine has a lion in painted alabaster before it, and inside, on a pedestal, is Durga, the Great Goddess. (In Bengal she is called Kali.) Durga is very pretty, and wears a rich cape, looking exactly and precisely like a dressed-up Madonna : any devout Italian—or Spanish or French—peasant would recognize her at once. Here she had a white face, but, as with the very holy Black Madonnas of Europe, she often, as Kali, has a black face. There are various objects disposed about the shrine, including a number of appalling colour-prints of gods and goddesses on the window-sill. In the right-hand shrine, before which kneels a painted alabaster bull, is Siva, the Great God, and Durga's husband. Aloft in a corner is their child Ganesha, the elephant-headed god of wisdom. In front of Siva, standing on a little pillar, is a flat but rimmed disc of alabaster, about two feet across, in the centre of which is a six-inch bump like a flattened cone, and having in it a depression containing a couple of pink roses and a marigold. Round the disc is a runnel for water, led off to a lip at the edge whence it will fall into a channel in the marble floor and flow out of the

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temple. You may see the same arrangement in the ruined ancient temples of Kashmir, over a thousand years old.

Between the first and second shrines sits the Pundit—the Brahman priest in charge—on a white cotton cloth, reading the Ramayan aloud to six or eight boys. Sometimes as many as twenty come to listen. They ask questions if they like. They join when they like and drift away when they like. They need not come at all (whereas the Muslim boys are obliged to go to morning and evening prayer, and the Sikhs to evening prayer: all these arrangements being outside the School's jurisdiction, for its function is purely secular).

I started off with a question to which no satisfactory answer has ever been found. All the gods but one are pink and white in complexion.

"Why," I asked one of the Maira boys, "has Krishna a black face?" For Krishna has always a black or blue face, yet he is supposed to have been very fair. The Maira boys not knowing, the Pundit was asked. He did not know either, but thought perhaps it had gone blue on the occasion of his swallowing some poison.

"Do you regard them as gods?" I asked the Mairas.

"Well," they said, "not exactly, Miss Prior. Rama is divine. Krishna is just about a god. We pray to them, and try to be like them. They remind us of good things."

"But Krishna led a very disreputable life with the Gopis, and left his own wife for Radha."

"Oh, but we think of him as a noble warrior!" they replied at once. And this is Punjab Hinduism. Farther east, Krishna has degenerated into a sort of whore's hero, performing prodigies of copulation with his Gopi milkmaids. Here, he is still the deified epic hero.

The boys were delighted to talk of Rama, Krishna and Sita: to them, they are very much of Achilles and Patroclus and Hector and Andromache. And indeed, the Ramayan, and the Mahabharata in spite of its accretions, is capital boys' romance: and it was a pleasure to find it so accepted still.

We passed on to Durga.

"Why the lion?" I asked.

"I don't know," they replied.

"Ask the Pundit," I said.

HINDU RELIGIOUS DETAILS

"She rides on it," said the Pundit, rather crossly. "It is her vehicle." It is extraordinary how crossness is the prevailing mood among temple Brahmans. I think it comes of a suppressed bad conscience : for those very intelligent men do not believe the superstition they hand out to the common people. The identical subtlety and crossness is often to be found among the Roman priesthood in charge of wonder-working shrines and statues in Europe.

The things inside the shrine interested me and I asked various questions : the Pundit left his book and came to explain them. He did not seem to object, and I stepped inside the shrine. I cannot imagine this being allowed in other parts of India. Some details of Durga's dress being of interest, I put out my hand to touch her : to this he did object and stopped me, and with a return of crossness, hurried me out of the shrine. Each shrine contained little trays of food for the divinities (this being evening) and a doll's bed, like an ordinary Indian charpoy, with a blanket and a sheet tidily turned down. In reply to enquiry, he said, yes, they rang the temple bell, took the gods off their pedestals, make-believe fed them, and put them into these beds each night.

We passed on to Siva's shrine. The Bull, of course, was Nandi, the white bull he rides upon. The boys knew he was Siva's bull, but—very oddly !—not his name. I asked the boys what the sort of fountain-affair in front was.

"That's always there," replied one, "it's his symbol."

"What is it ?" I said, "it looks like a vase for flowers."

"Oh, it's just his symbol," said the other ; "if you want to do an act of worship, you pour water over it."

"What for ?" I asked.

"I don't know," replied the boys.

"It's a Lingam," I said, "and it's supposed to be hot with energy, and the water is to cool it."

"I believe that's so," replied Ashok, "you seem to know something about our religion, Miss Prior," and his hazel-green eyes twinkled seriously.

A Lingam is, of course, a phallus, the male emblem of reproduction and of Siva. This was the most bowdlerized phallus you ever saw. Sweepers are not allowed in the holy of holies : but they may cleanse themselves in this holy water off the

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Lingam where it runs out of the temple wall, dribbling down outside by a holy drain.

"You don't seem to be very well up in it," I said, "and yet you are a very carefully brought-up pair."

"Well, Miss Prior, these are all the old things," they replied, talking first one and then the other; "they are all symbols."

"I dare say," I said; "symbols what of?"

"When we see them," they said, "they remind us of truths we ought to be thinking of. We don't think of them as they are."

"Well," I said, "when you don't know what they stand for, how can you know what they ought to make you think of?"

At this, the Maira boys laughed.

"Anyway," I said, "these gods being fed and put into those cots each night—what's that a symbol of? Does God get between sheets each night? What I want to know is—do these images have any connection with God in your minds at all?"

"Oh," they said, "we like to think of Rama and Krishna all right."

"And they are divine but not gods?"

"Well, Krishna is just about a god. We think every so often a special life is lived on earth, as an example to us to live rightly."

I forebore to hark back to Krishna's behaviour with the Gopis—the legendary milkmaids—a course of conduct that would horrify Punjabi parents, if their sons should take to it. We were joined by Mohan Chand, who knew even less than the Mairas, and certainly thought less. The theological position struck us all as lacking lucidity, and we gave it up.

"The Pundits understand these things, Miss Prior," said Mohan; "we don't, we just listen a bit. Look at me, Miss Prior, I'm a very religious chap."

The group round the Pundit, sitting in two lines on the floor, had enlarged a little. The Pundit was reading Ramayan at such a gabble that (according to my guides) it was nearly unintelligible. Yet they loved to hear him read.

"How long does it take to read through Ramayan?" I asked.

ART OF RELIGIOUS CONTEMPLATION

"About two months," they said.

"What other books will be read?"

"He only reads out the Ramayan. When he gets to the end he starts again."

Rama is, of course, a good and manly figure : but it seemed odd to make a religious book out of something so like the Iliad.—My eye fell on a boy sitting cross-legged by himself in a corner, dressed in white cotton, with a couple of marigolds in front of him, studiously doing nothing. He was about thirteen, and a pupil of mine.

We were now joined by one Harinder Bal, a very young senior.

"What," I asked, nodding at the sitting boy, "is *he* doing?"

"He is in contemplation."

"*In contemplation?*" I echoed incredulously. Visions of this young gentleman's normal character and occupations were in my mind : godliness was not his line. All he ever contemplated was devilry.

"He won't contemplate long," said Harinder, with his infectious grin, his husky voice somehow adding to his humour.

"How long?"

"Six or seven minutes is normal : I'd give him four," replied Harinder.

"What's the most boys work up to?"

"Oh, about twenty minutes!"

"Do they do it often?"

"Sometimes we get a fit of it."

"I have contemplated," announced Mohan, rolling his greengage eyes. "Miss Prior, ask me : *I* have contemplated. Madam, ask me."

"What did you contemplate?" I asked.

"Nothing," replied Mohan, with an immense grin.

"I contemplated twenty minutes a day for a week once," remarked Harinder.

"Why?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said ; "you think you will make a mark in religion, or something like that. Really you do it to impress others or for a joke. I didn't think of anything religious." The sparkle in his grey eyes told me that what he had contemplated had been Rabelaisian.

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"It's a stage you go through," said one Maira.

"Yes, Miss Prior, and you drop it," said the other ; " it's very uncomfortable to sit still like that, with your legs crossed."

At this point the contemplator came out of his trance, unfolded himself, and moved off, with a masterly combination of not noticing us but having one eye on the effect produced.

It was time for me then to go elsewhere. But another evening, as I sat under a tree, I was joined by a Hindu boy from Peshawar, one Jagannath, a grey-eyed youth of much intelligence and a dry humour. We got on to the subject of religion.

"What I'm always trying to find out, Jagannath," I said, "is : what real meaning has your religion for you any longer ?"

Jagannath made a wry face and smiled.

"It hasn't any," he said. "All old things. All finished."

"Do you go to the Temple ?" I asked. "Quite a number do."

"We go there for somewhere to go," he said. "It's a change from strolling and sitting in the evening."

"What about the religious instruction you get ?"

"It's all old things," he said, waving a hand.

"Doesn't the Pundit ever tell you anything worth hearing ?"

"The boys listen to his reading a bit, and then he tells them they oughtn't to eat with the Sikhs and Muslims and we ought to keep separate from them. So they get tired and stop going. We like the other boys. We don't like what the Pundit says. It's all nonsense, Miss Prior. All old things. All finished."

The boys had, as usual, produced the untrimmed truth. The attitude of older men was more circumspect : but their hearts were the same as the boys'. They might be very learned in their lore : it meant not much more to them than Greek mythology to a Greek scholar. Hindu mythology is as amoral and irresponsible as the Greek, with an added character of rich grotesquerie and unashamed sensuality, and though lofty minds may seek an inner and higher meaning, the difficulties to this are almost insuperable. For the average thinking Hindu, religion has come down to a retention of the traditional ceremonies—the thread ceremony, the haircutting, marriage, death, the funeral, and a number of women's home observances.

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An old father may contemplate a flame and a flower and a vessel of water in the dawn : the sons cannot see that this advances the soul, and it is inconvenient, so they neither practise nor repudiate : but now is growing up the generation which believes in nothing, and is merely married and buried in the old forms.

A Hindu friend of mine told me how a sister-in-law (or cousin-in-law) of his suffered from a blindness whose cause, from what he described of its coming and going, and of her circumstances, must have been psychological. She tried one of the two temples in Lahore. She tried doctors. She tried quacks. She tried faith-healers. In fact all possibilities, ancient and modern, were explored. The last I heard, she had found yet another Hindu practitioner of dubious kind, and he was having some success. I asked my friend what he thought of these excursions among images and priests ?

He would not say there was nothing in the power of images and priests. Nor would he say he could believe in such powers. He considered there was still much superstition. But he himself was an orthodox Hindu. He laughed genially if rather uncomfortably. "Well," he said, "I think we all know there is only one God."

Militant Sikhism is marked in the person by the long hair and beard of the men. There is a modernist section that dispenses with the head-hair and beard, and also a very old section that has never taken to it. Hindus of course cut the hair and are clean-shaven : every now and again you meet a very countrified Hindu who preserves the long tuft of hair at the crown of the head, by which he is supposed to be hauled up to heaven. Muslims cut the hair but rather fancy the beard in later years. The Sikh custom is of extreme inconvenience to its devotees. When they are playing games, turbans being quite impossible, they knot up their hair at the tops of their heads with a handkerchief. In hot weather their expression of opinion is frank.

"Phoo, Miss Prior ! All this hair !" from one sweat-bedewed youth, flapping his short beard outward from his chin with his finger-tips, to get the air round his neck. "What wouldn't I give to be without it !"

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"Well, why don't you take a firm line and shave it off?"

"Oh, madam, the row at home! Besides, it's part of our religion."

"What does it signify, the long hair?"

"I don't know! the Guru said we were to wear it so."

"Where did he get the idea?"

"I don't know! Some say he travelled in Arabia and got the idea there."

"No, you're wrong," says another boy. "The Tenth Guru, who turned us into a fighting faith to resist Aurangzeb, gave it to us as a sort of uniform, and said we were all to be called 'Singh'." ("Singh" means "Lion".)

This conversation occurred over and over again, with various boys and masters: the main point was, that no one wished to take the plunge. A "shaven Sikh" was universally looked down on as a fallen brother. "I guess we are expected to suffer and endure," said one of the boys one day, fanning himself with an exercise book and blowing upwards out of the corners of his mouth. Probably he is right, too.

A "shaven Sikh", when you meet one, takes the first opportunity to inform you—"I am a shaven Sikh"—lest he be considered to have lapsed from Sikhism. If, however, he is one of the old sect that never took to the "uniform"—Kes, Kangh, Kara, Kirpan, Kacch—the uncut hair, the iron comb, the iron bracelet, the sword and the shorts—he will not be out for the opportunity. Such Sikhs do not approve of the militant teachings of Guru Govind the Tenth Guru, and are little removed from what they originally were—reformed monotheistic Hindus. But the modernist man who has deliberately departed from the insignia of Guru Govind has nevertheless no wish to be mistaken for a Hindu.

But the dividing-line is delicate.

"The people are such fools, Madam," said Ranjit Singh. "We do not have idols like the Hindus, but, believe me, the people will worship and pray to the Granth Sahib."

"How can they do that—to a book!"

"Well, they do, Miss Prior. They think the Book is the Guru."

The upshot of the policy of the School in the matter of

AITCHISON'S GREATEST SERVICE

religion was manifest. The boys left it prepared to co-operate in their men's sphere with men of another creed, feeling them to be fellows and not some strange fauna. They left it entirely cured of the objection to eating and drinking with men of another religion—though in entertaining one another in their homes, they saw to it that a Muslim was offered *halal*-killed meat, a Sikh *jatka*-killed, and a Hindu a vegetarian dish. This is a matter of prime importance : for like the orthodox Jew, the orthodox Indian considers his soul is involved in what he eats. But if men will not eat together, much fellowship and human intercourse are lost. There was at Aitchison a sort of common denominator in religion, and the daily prayer at call-over was typical of it. It was a variable prayer, addressed to God. It was generally read by the Christian Principal, but later it was read by a Muslim and a Hindu. The boys liked it : so did the masters. As one of the Hindus said to me, " It is good : you feel that the right thing has been done, it is good to hear of God each day, even so little."

Nor was this merely a schoolboy phase. Something went on. Your friends and companions had been boys of another creed : it hadn't interfered. All your life this fact lay around in the back of your mind. You had learned to co-operate effectively to certain ends—games, school orderliness. You went out to help govern in a district, a business, a province : always with some recollection of an earlier common effort. Various men, from the Governor to servants, told me that you could always distinguish a boy from this school : he was good for certain uses—in this Aitchison, like the Forman Christian and other Colleges producing equally marked results, was building on a great reality, the natural tendency of all Punjabis, of whatever persuasion, to associate freely, to get on together, to be—in a word—fully developed men.

Nevertheless, in spite of the keenness of the Muslim and the Sikh, and the conservatism of the Hindu, and the many benevolent activities of all three and especially the last two, it is not long before you realize that religion in all three persuasions amounts to formalism. The good Muslim is the man who prays at the regulation times and observes the regulation feasts. So is the good Sikh. So is the good Hindu,

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with the addition of a number of quaint household practices. But beyond practising the forms, and keeping to their own flock, very few have any idea of what they stand for. Personal prayer is very seldom spontaneous. To God you offer official worship : you seldom invoke His help : you very very seldom dream of laying out your character before Him and inviting His correction of it : and you have no ideal of a personal relationship with God in your scheme of thought. You have no clear life-pattern, such as Christ's, by which to measure your own shortcomings. You do the outward done things, and if you do them completely, you are uncommonly good.

I was interested to find that in the Punjab, the educated classes are very largely acquainted with the New Testament. This, I think, is chiefly due to the Forman Christian College, an American college giving a first-class University education, but stipulating that all its students shall attend readings and discussions on the New Testament. No attempt is made at conversion. There are other such colleges, both male and female.

To the Muslim, of course, Jesus Christ is "Ruh-Ullah", the "Voice of God", a major Prophet. Some Muslims are beginning to see that the Christian and the Muslim have little to quarrel over, though the doctrine of the Trinity is repudiated, and the Divinity of Christ not admitted. "What we cannot accept," said my friend Latif to me, "is that you call Jesus God and pray to Him." To which I replied—I hope fairly correctly—that we did not consider Jesus to be God, but a Spirit that came from God, and that God was in His Spirit : and that He never told us to pray to Him, but direct to God, pleading His Name. This view of the matter she found entirely reasonable. I think young Mubarak Abbassi put it very well. "We didn't listen to Christ when He came, Miss Prior," he said, "so God in His goodness gave us Mohammed."

To the Sikh, Christianity is very interesting, but the call of Christ is to be resisted. A man cannot serve two Masters, and the Sikh is devoted to his Gurus. The Granth Sahib, however, in which the spirit of the Gurus is considered to reside, is not an entirely original composition, but with excellent

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catholicity contains passages from not only the Hindu books, but the Koran and Testaments, such as struck the Guru as being of true value. The meekness of Christianity both appeals to and repels the Sikh : with the relentless energy of Christ he agrees. (Sikhism aims to persuade, and never so far as I know converts "forcibly".) The general content of the Christian gospel is to their taste : for they agree with its ideals and are of themselves much given to helping the poor. Most thinking Sikhs have read the Gospels, and it ferments in their minds considerably.

As for the Hindus, the old-fashioned and formal are violently opposed to Christianity, for, like Islam, it is uncompromising on the subject of caste. In Middle and South India, the Roman Catholics used to make concessions to caste, allowing Brahmans the front seats and first access to the Sacrament, or separate pens by which to approach the Sanctuary : which brings in more converts, but on such a basis the validity of the conversion may well be questioned. In the Punjab caste is in any case not so pressing and the Protestant forms of Christianity appeal more to the Punjabi and so no such concessions are made. One way or another, large numbers of Hindus come to read the Gospels, and it is quite clear that they appreciate what they read there, or at any rate pay it the compliment of recognizing that as a way of life it makes sense, though it constitutes a challenge. Indeed, apart from the rejection of polytheism and caste, and its tacit rejection of the doctrines of reincarnation and the transmigration of souls, the Gospels present pretty much of an epitome of all that is best in Hinduism, and at that, present it with a stinging simplicity. To the Punjabi Hindu, with his comparative freedom from polytheism and caste fetters, and with his comparatively straight mind, his manliness, and his natural inclination to kindly and sociable behaviour, Christianity is somewhat attractive, and very apt, once he has come across it, to lodge in his mind and work insensibly but effectively therein. Moreover, it is clear that the self-revealing figure of Christ has caught the Indian, and especially the Hindu, imagination. I was very surprised at the number of Hindus who were conscious of the pattern of that Life, and ready to talk of "Christian" virtues or a "Christlike" character. They use those terms with a

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good idea of what is implied : and it is the highest compliment that they can pay.

I could not help feeling, and so I cannot help writing it down, that Punjabis are very much the stuff of which proper Christians are made. I mean real Christians, the sort who follow the Gospels and not some cut-throat sect : who think for themselves. They are simple, and fundamentally direct and honest. Nowhere else—unless perhaps in Arabia—do you so often meet in town or village men who put you in mind of the Patriarchs or the Apostles—men who have that massively simple attitude to life which comprehends both earth and heaven, and is capable of everything between, and out-distances all intellectualism. And nowhere else have I met women who can so well combine strength with a yielding sweetness, full of spirit and character. There was a curious atmosphere of the people having, in religious matters, rather come to an end of what they were at : a feeling of “ what now ? ” Such centuries of repetitive observance, so little sap rising in the spirit : and it has left them most obviously in a dead-end of civilization. The Punjabi is too naturally restless and energetic to repose in a dead-end. If you give him a bicycle, he bicycles furiously. If you give him trains, he begins energetically to move around. If you give him improved seed and ploughs, he gets up bumper crops. If you take canals into the desert, he turns it into a garden.

If you give him a new book, and a new idea, what may you look forward to ? If you give him a deathless pattern in the life of a deathless Teacher, what may occur ?

CHAPTER 9

MANNERS MAKYTH MAN

PUNJABI manners, it must be clear already, are noticeable first and foremost for bonhomie. I was always wanting to discover what were the jokes that the population seemed to produce so prolifically : as far as I could judge, the humour lay in a sense of the comic. Punjabi speech lends itself to the comic in a way impossible to elegant Urdu or Hindi. Urdu, with its fine finish, is a vehicle for wit rather than humour. My friend Latif told me not to enquire : " I am so thankful you can't understand Punjabi," she said, " because most of the things they say are dreadful—they make your ears burn." " What do you do when you hear such jokes ? " I asked. " I don't know ! pretend I haven't heard or don't understand Punjabi ! I blush ! "—Clearly then Punjabi humour was decidedly of the Flemish sort : but some of it consisted in " stories " like the German " Witze ", and I set my most senior boys to write upon the subject of the national humour, with a view to discovering if possible what did not come out in (English) conversation. Ranjit Singh produced the following example, which apparently is the sort of thing Punjabis find truly funny.

" During the war, petrol being scarce, the people took largely to foot and cycle. A certain Minister, to set a good example and back up the war effort, decided to give up driving both to and from his office. Generally he drove to his office, and the car and man waited all day in the office grounds, and then he drove home again. So what did he do ? He was very keen on doing his bit to save petrol. He drove to his office. Then he at once sent the car and driver home. Then in the evening he himself walked home."

In general, besides this prevailing tendency to see the funny side of things, Punjab manners are for the most part courteous—the sort of courtesy arising from good humour and a good digestion, rather boisterous : but there is also an innate knowledge of how to conduct an occasion : there is, in the most

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rude and uneducated, a tradition of manners, in a word, breeding. It is unmistakable : and yet it goes along with every kind of indifference, inefficiency and callousness. Two things are eminently lacking. There is little or no consideration for inferiors : those are to be shouted at. However it is a genial shouting, except when it is a hot-headed row : it is not the distasteful scolding of south and east. In this offence the Hindus and Sikhs are pre-eminent. Muslims regard their servants rather as friends, and treat them well, upon the whole. There is also no particularity in a man's bearing towards a woman. It never occurs to a man to give a woman first turn at anything : he takes for himself. Except for the mother : she receives reverence.

I wondered whether the three religions produced any really material differences in the character. Men and women in modern society learn to produce a tolerably smooth surface, and since they do not grossly betray themselves with words, it takes many years of watching actions to arrive at any idea of the real person under the mask. But, as Wordsworth says, "the Child is father of the Man", and even the oldest boys at Aitchison had not learned much social dissimulation.

I found that, apart from the little Sikhs being self-conscious about their long hair, there was not much difference in the young children. Perhaps the Hindu baby boy was the most spoilt and the Muslim baby boy least spoilt : for the Hindu baby boy is simply the future Lord, while the Muslim baby boy is brought up to hope he may not disgrace the Prophet and his ancestors : but all were so thoroughly and fearfully spoilt that the observation amounts to very little. This spoiling of the character begins in the cradle, and its effects are with the man for life. The baby boy of any Indian house is its avowed and worshipped King. He is never taught to be regular even over his first physical functions. He piddles where he stands—even on a good carpet and in the front of guests—the other is done with more care in back regions, but with no attempt at regularity : his mother or nurse feeds him at any odd time : his sleep has no hours and he may be woken at any time for the amusement of a guest : when he feeds himself, he eats very disgustingly and no effort is made to teach him to eat prettily : he never puts on his own simple clothes. Above all, he is

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never induced to look at anything with interest or do anything to amuse himself. He is never led to look at a flower or a bird and learn anything of them ; he is never taught to cut out or put together : indeed, his hands are nearly useless, unless he is a ploughman or an artisan. If he is a child of tradesmen, his hands are for scrivening : if a child of warriors, for fighting. But if he is just a “ gentleman ”, they are for nothing. He grows up without good habits, with very many bad habits, and with the sole idea, “ I am the centre of existence : let all come to ME.” The whole foundation of his character, by training, is therefore a selfish inertness.

One is bound to observe, of course, that the baby children brought up in this way—with unfailing indulgence and without even as much training as a bitch gives her pups : like little (very dirty) animals—are signally free of any fractiousness of temper. They howl only if hurt : they never cry because they are countered—for they never are countered. The world, so far as they can see, exists in order to serve the whims of the baby. Consequently, they grow up full of demands and expectations, but they never learn to struggle to get their own way, or to put up with an uncomfortable but unyielding circumstance. They grow up soft.—I speak of course of the boys.

The girls are no better reared, and often quite as much indulged, but they are reared in the disciplining shadow of one overwhelming conception : they are inferior, and exist only to serve men. This has the effect of crippling any instinct to initiative or independence or self-development. It makes of Indian women a nobler but sadder and more limited race than the men. It also produces among them just what you would expect, when, in all the younger years from five to forty, the woman is repressed in her reason : tyrants—that sort of tyrant you see more nakedly in India than in any other land, the half-animal woman tyrannizing over husband or lover through the exploitation of the passions : and the older woman, at last the senior mother or mother-in-law in her home, cantankerously and ignorantly tyrannizing over sons and daughters-in-law. The bodily habits of a baby are set before it is two years old, and its character set in its main lines before it is seven years old—this is the mother’s fatal handiwork. Whatever is later added in the way of knowledge and accomplishment, the

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character will be along the lines so early laid down. Children reared like the average adored Indian baby, by women such as the average Indian woman, cannot by any means later become the stable, developed characters that alone make great people and progressive history. Nevertheless, the Punjabi comes of the most energetic stock in the world—the “Nordic”: and at adolescence his future manhood begins to sting him up, and he develops that energy, will and desire which are his excellence. Nor is his sister very far behind: she is less meek than any other sort of Indian woman. But almost every Punjabi I ever met swung between energy and inertia, keen interest and torpid slackness, great attack and sudden lengthy relapses, undertakings enthusiastically begun and left unfinished, rectitude and collapse into corruption.

All things are possible to this people if only they would develop steadiness of purpose and persistence in execution.

Strong and obvious as is the oneness of the Punjabi people—which term I use loosely to designate the homogeneous conglomerate that stretches from the Jumna in the east to the Pathan peoples of the North-Western Frontier Province—the differences in religion do coincide with striking differences in character. It is certainly the case that the religions produce the character; it is not the case that types prefer to adopt this religion or that. For one thing, nobody can “become” a Hindu: you are born one. For another, when a person of marked Hindu or Sikh type takes to Islam, or a Hindu to Sikhism, in the next generation the change is obvious and present. Nor is there any reason why this should not be so: for what you think—your character—gradually and inevitably marks your person, like writing on an envelope. And of all forms of thinking, religious thinking is the most powerful, for it is conviction and faith and feeling, and not merely an intellectual (and therefore limited and superficial) idea, it affects not only the intellect but the whole soul: it takes up the whole personality from its highest reason down to its dimmest roots and envelops it with spirit, it is at the springs of vital energy. And in India religion is still the main interest of humanity. So it is perhaps not surprising if the schools of religious thought produce—which is the fact—schools of character and appearance.

PUNJABI MUSLIM CHARACTER

The religion of the majority in North-western India is Islam. In some ways the Muslim character is the least entertaining and the least exciting, but there is no doubt that it is much the easiest to co-operate with. Perhaps the leading characteristic is a certain simplicity. Enemies will tell you that this is because, during the early days of conversion by sword and violence, only the defenceless fools suffered conversion (the great class of exception being the rich and clever class of Hindu traders who paid the Mogul poll-tax and retained their religion and with it their ancestral right to engage in usury, a trade forbidden to Muslims)—but I don't think so. The simplicity I mean is a leading characteristic among the rich and well-born as well as the lowly. It consists in a friendly and comfortable hospitality, a respect for fundamental family decencies, the idea that you may be rich now and should enjoy it, and may quite well be poor to-morrow, but that the truth lies behind all such states : there is a genuine idea of honesty, as we understand it in the West—understood quite well by the cheap rogue and the corrupt administrator, who know that in the final count they are falling short. There is a strict idea of sexual morals : the man who is profligate, whether at home or in the city, knows he is not doing well. It is a religion which demands a good deal of austere observance and annually a month of rather severe abstinence and self-control—an abstinence rarely broken. This is the fast of Ramazan. For a month Muslims may neither eat nor drink between sunrise and sunset. At night they can eat and drink heavily if they choose, but then as they work as usual all day, they must also sleep. The month, being a lunar month, moves on a few days each year, and consequently may fall for much of a man's life in the horribly hot season. It takes moral and physical stamina to sweat at 114° and never wet your tongue. Children and women are exempt, but women do also fast. Muslims do not seek to soften the rigours of their religion : it braces them morally, as the rigour of winter braces the body. On the whole Indian Muslims are peaceable and law-abiding (always excepting the feud-ridden, piratical and turbulent hill-tribes)—but when finally roused to fight, they are extremely fierce, exhibiting the full violence of the *furor teutonicus* which still is in their Nordic, if Indianized, blood.

MANNERS MAKYTH MAN

You generally know a Muslim when you speak to him. He has a pleasant and humane manner. He is intelligent rather than subtle-witted : his academic performance is a long way behind the Hindu's, but when it comes up to the Hindu standard, he can add to it an elegant refinement and a straight-mindedness seldom found in the Hindu. Even when (as is often the case) he is extremely stupid, he is still heir to those good ideas which make an agreeable person, quite apart from cleverness. He responds naturally to tales of nobility, bravery, sentiment and romance. He is lazy, rather gentlemanly, and if of the country people, often a person of striking natural dignity. The ladies are pleasant and sisterly, often marred by extreme ignorance, sometimes most refined and dignified : if of the country, they step out freely and speak out their minds. Both men and women have much self-respect.

You feel somehow, when dealing with Muslims, that you are dealing with something perhaps rigid and perhaps limited, but essentially good, something you can lay hold of, like a stick that will not explode or turn into a snake in your hand : something classical. In the little tales the papers print you may meet with a most charming feeling, a sense of shape and style : in their poetry, in spite of the limitation of form, you meet the true lyric. It must be this classic nature and this natural sense of form and shape and simple quality, and this sense of honesty and some generosity even in the Muslim rogue, which bestows upon the Muslims their greatest gift—the power of rule. Even as I write, I read that the Governor-General of Pakistan has directed the British Governor of the Punjab to take over rule, pending the re-election of the members of the Legislative Assembly, as gross corruption and place-seeking has thrown the whole Administration out of order : yet in these people, corrupt and collapsed as they are, there does reside the kingly gift of government.

The character of those other monotheists, the Sikhs, is exceedingly different. When you think of the Sikh character, there leap together into your mind their ruthless energy, the striking lack of anything poetical in their background—I express that with difficulty : Sikh families will have energetic histories of battle, trade, or husbandry, but they have seldom read a

SIKH CHARACTER

book or dreamed of anything to do with beauty or chivalry or any but smash-and-grab love. Sikhs are renowned for their stupidity, and scarcely less for intrigue : and are socially often most inconsiderate. With only enough exceptions to prove the rule, your Sikh pupils will be in a lump two-thirds of the way down every class, one or two competing for the bottom place with a Muslim : and they will be the fiercest all-rounders at games and sports. It is, again, their version of their Nordic heritage of the *furor teutonicus*. Once their blood is hot and up, they are fierce and nearly mad. It is a common joke against Sikhs, that after high noon, they lose their wits : if you want to explain some madness a Sikh has done, or tease your friend, you mock him with "*Bara baj gya !*" "*It's gone twelve !*" And once their blood is up in war, they are terrible, though in between bouts they cover themselves with an insolent, lah-di-dah, dandified arrogance. Your Sikh friends will all be farmers, soldiers or policemen, or engaged in trade—especially in contractors' work, or retail ironmongery—with a truly dynamic tendency to prosper. Boys and men, they take early—if chance offers—to profligacy and drink : but, their religion forbidding it, they will never smoke and so are free of the soothing lethargy engendered by indulgence in the sorcerous hubble-bubble, to which their Muslim brothers are much addicted. Consequently they are the most modern of all Indians. High and low, they grasp restlessly after whatever is advantageous, a sewing-machine, a method of agriculture, East African trade, wars. Their relations with their women are fond, free, possessive, very careless and negligent : on the other hand, what they lose in ceremoniousness they gain in naturalness. They are the warmest and jolliest of friends : but having once been hurt in their sense of their own dignity or property—which occurs easily for they are devoid of patience and as prickly as sea-urchins—they will turn bitterly against you, and your erstwhile friend will become an envenomed sword pursuing you. Indeed Sikh villages top the list by far in the score of violent murders : nearly all go back to the passion of lust, the passion of vanity, or the passion of property.

The character I have described above, however, does not belong to all Sikhs : it belongs to the great majority, and it is noticeable that—with a good start from bodily character—it

belongs to the followers of militant Sikhism. Sikhs are really a branch of Hindus who have done away with idols and temple-worship and the caste-system and have, at the hands of ten successive Teachers, or Gurus, obtained a good bible of their own ; and originally the creed was a pacific creed, but the last Guru, in the days of Muslim persecution, formed them into a militant body wearing marks of dress and person. The majority followed this teacher and militancy has been their mark ever since. But a large body did not adopt either the marks or the militancy : they are despised by the militant majority but quietly keep to the older way because they have no taste for swashbuckling. Nevertheless they have no wish to be mistaken for Hindus either : and the non-militant Sikh, as also the modernist militant who has dared to cut his hair and beard and discard his turban, loses no time in letting you know his persuasion.

The young boy is made into a true Sikh at a tender age. At about seven years, when the Prussian Junker was haled off out of his nursery into the military academy, and the British boy, dedicated to be a gentleman, is committed to the milder rigours of a prep. school, the Sikh boy is taken in hand by his elders and the incumbent of the local Gurdwara, is initiated, is given his iron bracelet, and remorselessly taught what it is to be a Sikh. It is a fine teaching too, and the boys are proud to be Sikhs. Nor are the girls neglected : they are not expected to become warriors, but they are taught their religion as well as the boys and are on equal footing in their common worship. Since both sexes are indoctrinated to the same purpose, Sikh character emerges strongly homogeneous : energetic, turbulent, devoutly militant, prone to explode from emotion or conviction and little given to reason.

But where you get a Sikh of intelligence and kindness, and especially where you get a Sikh of unvengeful and simple heart, given to reading the Granth Sahib and the Hindu Bhagavadgita and thinking upon them, and given to the heartfelt private prayer enjoined but seldom practised—then there develops a character of most striking beauty. The rank energy of the race passes into tireless and probably philanthropic work, and into a family life of great regularity and benevolence. I remember one such family in Lahore : a childless couple of

HINDU CHARACTER

great personal dignity. The husband ran a clinic for antirabic treatment, and by a curious coincidence was remarkably like Louis Pasteur in feature. The wife engaged herself in work for women, and both took a very sane interest in politics. They had friends both Muslim and Hindu and the ground of these friendships was a realization of religious unity in the conception of God, indeed our friend used to lend his little prayer-closet to any Muslim friend, should the Muslim's hour for prayer fall while he was in the Sikh's house. I was taken along to meet the wife's sister and her husband, shortly after the birth of a late child : and the house had one of the most beautiful family atmospheres I have ever experienced, an atmosphere of welcome, of rest, and a tranquil happiness, like a perfect flower wide open and confident in the sun.

Lastly, there is the physical appearance of the Sikhs. They may—and often do—raven like the wolf : they are commonly characterized by the finest looks and build of any race on earth. North-western Indians are in general a fine-looking lot : but no race or tribe among them can put up such a high percentage of men or women deserving the adjective “superb”. Fine bodies, fine carriage, fine skulls, splendid features, magnificent hair, fair skins, often physically built like the masterpieces of Phidias and Michelangelo. But neither is there any degenerate like a weedy son of this redoubtable stock, worn out before he was born by his father's reckless pursuit of whisky and whores.

So we come to the Hindu. I have dwelt at some length elsewhere on the Hindu. Hindus one associates almost at once with the epithet “mild”, and on the whole it is deserved, for with the exception of the warrior Rajputs, Hindus may be said to make a study of keeping out of fights, whether street fights or wars. They do not murder one another : their villages are not very violent, though often they act as instigators, being quite unable to see that words set fire to their hotter-blooded neighbours. Their weapons are quite other than the weapons of war. Like wild vines, they strangle their hosts, the Brahman by a network of religious obligations, rites which must be gone through or salvation forfeited, all involving dues payable to himself in money or free meals : and the

tradesman-usurer by a web of fantastic debts, which (especially since British law came to protect the usurer and hang the rough reckoner) often have the effect of making a whole village into the Bunnia's serfs. These two sorts of Hindus are eminently "mild". They represent between them the entire Hindu intelligentsia: they leave out of count the warrior Rajputs of Rajputana (about three millions), who are of high standing and gallant nature, but not remarkable for brains, and the lowly mass of artisans and tillers of the soil who are poor, cheerful, and given to wordy rows, weddings, funerals, singsongs and bucolic jollifications.

So when one speaks of the "Hindu character", one generally means the character emerging from the Brahman-Bunnia class. In the Punjab two striking points immediately show up. The Punjabi Brahman is less of a spiritual lord and parasite than anywhere else in India, and frequently can only be identified as a Brahman by his often fine features and slender build, by the relict of the tabus about impure eating and drinking, and of course by his *gotra*-name, which tells you at once that he is a Brahman. The Punjabi Bunnia is—unlike his caste-brethren in Eastern, Middle or Southern India—a great deal of a man, and quite likely in time of war to take up arms. A great class within this class is the Khatri, a sort of man (Khatris are not a clan) found nowhere else in India, and exceedingly unlike the Bunnia-types of other regions. They are very manly men. In build they are burlier than the Brahmans, and in feature seldom so fine-set: otherwise they are of the same physical type.

Now emerges the chief characteristic of the Hindu peoples of the Punjab: they possess the brains. They will scarcely ever be bottom of a class. There are few in the bottom third: they will jostle together thickly near the top. Your intelligent groups in society will work out at three Hindus to two Muslims and one Sikh. They are seldom lazy. They are not naturally keen on games (though the Khatri types take to them eagerly). They live by the ideas of working successfully and living in their homes. Their girls are as intelligent as the boys, and while the girls are brought up to be absolutely subservient to father and husband, even to serving him hand and foot, this is compensated to some extent by the high natural reverence

MORE HINDU CHARACTER

paid to the Hindu mother. As for the unmarried Hindu woman, she is neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring ; she is an anomaly. She has no independence of attitude and there is no place whatever for her in society. Hindus are kind, unkind as a rule only by neglect or inertia : they are charitable, being much given to founding charitable homes and, for example, were the heaviest subscribers to the Lahore S.P.C.A. Such charity is generally done quietly, I think largely to evade being further begged from, for Hindus of a good family are brought up to feel they must give upon request, even if only a fraction of a farthing. (This is why begging offers great careers both for cripples and for cripple-guild kings in India.) They are friendly, but not very much inclined to throw their houses open to you ; though this depends to what extent they have become free of food and drink tabus, and to what extent they have progressed from the fearful slovenliness and shabbiness so common in Hindu homes, where the cooking-pots and the person must be perfectly clean, and the floors swept, but the walls, furniture, roof, yard, drains, are probably terrible. Hindus talk easily and pleasantly among equals, but address inferiors with striking roughness and rudeness, believing that inferiors are born lower because they need further chastening for lack of excellence in former lives. They like good posts, and love the appearance of authority, and feuds over face and seniority run to bitter lengths of rancorous intrigue : but they commonly and notably detest responsibility. The Hindu ideal is to live comfortably, but moderately, using the wits and not the fists, steadily amassing more and more and more of what thieves used to break in and steal, till the banks were developed (and which Indian bank authorities are sometimes inclined to embezzle) : and to enjoy a good pensioned post while evading responsibility, unless they are of a kidney to run a business of their own. Hindus, like the Jews, enjoy trade and professions and clerkships, but responsible public decisions they do all they can to avoid.

As for the Hindu religion, I have spoken of it elsewhere : it is less obvious, in the Punjab, than the vague code of family ethics by which, together with a consideration of what is of advantage, they guide their lives. For the Hindu, the great realities are family, relations, and home. Members of the

family must be saved, prospered, and served above all. To the Hindu, it is not a crime but a virtue to fill high posts with relations: for the Hindu has no sense of social or public obligation. Bribery is not a crime either: it is a common-sense and hallowed custom. Hindus have seldom much idea of public integrity because they have no idea of public posts or public service: they know what pays personally, and their virtues are private and domestic. Hindu society has never evolved any sort of civic system, and the only sort of Hindu to come to rule is the feudal Rajput: Brahman rule is rare and infamous, rule by a man of trader caste (except as Diwans or First Ministers, in which rôle they do well) unheard of.

The character of the Hindu mind, as I encountered it, was a compound of high intelligence, kindness or geniality: a love of high posts without responsibility—i.e. work in abstraction—or devotion to business: a love of the great professions of law, medicine, and academic study, which afford maximum remuneration with minimum manual labour: allied to much charm, much curious and binding religious observance, with a fluidity of principles that was absolutely baffling.

Perhaps it would serve if I approximately illustrated the foregoing summaries by a few brief incidents: but I will take another chapter for this. I will sum up this chapter with an experience that shows the different effects of different religious teaching as clearly as one is likely to see it.

This occurred early in my Aitchison career, and with one of my favourite classes, whose members were still largely unknown quantities to me.

I set them the following composition: "You are staying at a hotel in Karachi, and have gone out to dinner. You come back unexpectedly, and you find an old man ransacking your drawers.—Go on with this story."

The results were quite unexpected, and I found they fell into three categories, and these coincided with the religions of the boys.

The narratives of the Hindu boys were involved and lacked any direction and also any principle. One boy described himself as falling into chat with the old man, ended up by being sorry for him, and gave him money and a blessing. Another

CHARACTERS SELF-REVEALED

boy (very typically) blustered offensively at the old man, threatened him with a stick, and then vaguely told him not to be long and departed himself.

The narratives of the Sikhs were bold and wild and romantic. One fell on the old man like a tiger and beat him up till he cried for mercy, and then kicked him out over the balcony. Another fell on him and found in his possession a photograph of a beautiful girl. This was his daughter. So he let the old man go free on condition he brought him his daughter. Upon the arrival of the damsel he fell in love with her and married her, and was happy.

The Muslim boys were very muddled, too, and resembled the Sikh boys in tackling the malefactor, but they had a sense of right and wrong and civic behaviour. By various paths they arrived at the same end, namely, they handed the thief over to the police to let the law deal with him. Yet one of the boys himself was a very lawless soul, and came from wild Pathan country beyond the border.

None of my boys being Communists, I cannot tell you what the effects of Communist indoctrination would be. None were Christian either. But that minds, and consequently behaviour, are characteristically influenced by the authoritative ideas brought to bear on them in youth cannot be doubted for a moment.

The fate of humanity is not decided in wars or on battlefields : it is decided in the realm of ideas, in the home and the community. Not the strongest race inherits the earth, but the best idea. And bad ideas can only be defeated by good ideas.

CHAPTER 10

SEX AND MORALS

A PEOPLE'S thinking and behaviour on this innermost vital subject is the sure truth about the state of their religion and hence their general morals and arts. In this matter, the primitives of India are primitive, and the civilized imprisoned in a cage of conventions. In one part of India is practised the savage Spring sacrifice of a youth and a maiden, chosen by lot, "married" for a few weeks, and fed up by the tribe, to be slain, hacked into pieces, and the blood and flesh buried in the tribal fields. In other parts there prevails at present the most elaborate "Victorianism".

It must be emphasized again that the Punjab is the Punjab and what is in the Punjab is *not* typical of the other four-fifths of India.

The Punjab, and North-west India in general, abominates the child-marriages practised elsewhere. In the Punjab even the Hindu trading-castes fight shy of twelve-year-old brides and sixty-year-old grooms. The proper age for marriage is considered to be sixteen and upwards for a girl, eighteen and upwards for a boy, the choice ages being a bride of eighteen to a young man of twenty-five. An unmarried girl of twenty-two is unfortunate, and an unmarried man of over thirty is universally regarded as being unmarried because he is physically unfit. But with the spread of education, and especially female education, the ages are rising, and University women may leave marriage till twenty-five or twenty-seven. The youngest marriages are always practised in the Hindu trading-castes, except in the few ruling families in backward places, where unsuitable unions may be forced on by intriguing relations or retainers.

One of the first things to strike you in the Punjab is the fine girls you see, whether in the country or in bazaars or in schools: free-stepping, untrammelled and handsome. In Lahore they ride bicycles and dance and shop, and bear them-

PUNJABI WOMEN

selves as freely as Europeans, but none of that is typical—it is in the nature of a promise for the future : for five that ride bicycles, there are fifty in the half or wholly purdah schools and colleges, and for the fifty being educated, are five hundred kept fairly closely to house, up and down the towns and villages. But it must be admitted that even the conservative Punjab is beginning to find use for women working in public capacities, and except in backward Muslim areas, such are not regarded as infamous.

The women's morals, and the women's views on sex, are like the views and morals of all women in this matter, when they are thoroughly repressed as a subject creation, subject to the Patriarch (if Muslim) and to the Husband Lord God (if Hindu). The women are both wise and childish, ignorant and perspicacious, tyrants and slaves. Seldom are they the companions and equals of their men, though this happens most often among peasants, where both work hard : but these do not realize their blessing, and the one ambition of the peasant is to reach the point of genteelly secluding his wife and maintaining her in comparative idleness, which increases his consequence but reduces her true dignity and ruins her health. The appalling dangers of childbirth as handled by village *dais* take off countless young women. Families are not often above four or six, for death takes many ; the couple are linked more by habit than by love, and upper-class men freely spend their manhood elsewhere : though it must be realized that in villages, the moral standard in this as in other things stands rather high. The women, on the whole, are remarkably chaste. They are nearly all mothers, and this is their chief joy and satisfaction. Muslim women, especially if widowed, sometimes take lovers : Hindu women, even if most unhappy, exceedingly seldom. No woman regards her husband's infidelity as grounds for divorce : a good husband is one who is affectionate and who provides well. Virginity is a *sine qua non* in the unmarried girl : Indian girls of all sorts are revolted by the thought of intercourse except with a husband. The practice of sexual life is looked on as a duty, and as good and necessary, and a husband's husbandliness is held to consist in keeping his wife satisfied : but respectable women can never admit it to be a source of pleasure or joy or

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anything to do with what they mean by "love". The keynote on the woman's side is submission: the object is to have children. Motherhood women will talk of freely: their attitude to sex is an astonishing combination of outspokenness and tabu—but, as is usual with women, the tabu only comes into action when the conversation is with one of the opposite sex. There is not much they will not discuss with one another. Indian women, like most other women, seldom share in the guilty shame-complexes of the male sex: to them sex is so big and whole, it is so much life and nature, and cross-woven with so much tender feeling, that they simply accept it, and what they don't like they lump. They are mothers rather than lovers, and the lavish expenditure of love on the children helps them to endure the irregularities of their spouses and the virtual slavery of their position.

As for the irregularities and difficulties, it should be made clear that they chiefly attend the richer classes; they scarcely exist for the peasant, and the peasant is 90 per cent of the Punjab. The peasant lives with his mate, and if he is away from home—as the Punjab peasant often is, soldiering or sailing, or in service—he steers completely clear of whores and of other men's wives and daughters. I was once told by an officer that, during the Persian campaigns, of the British and Indian soldiers brigaded together under his charge, at one time all the British were incapable of field service by reason of having contracted venereal disease, because they could not keep off women, while the hardy and virile Punjabis were totally clear of it, because they abstained. Owing to insufficient housing in our compound at Aitchison, junior bearers' wives remained in their villages, so the men only lived with them during the long vacation: and during the terms, they resorted neither to women, men nor animals.

My own bearer (my third: my hayseed I parted with, and the efficient Ramzan was only loaned to me), a man of twenty-seven or thirty, came to me in great joy after a spell of leave, because a bride had been found for him. I thought the marriage would follow in a few months, but not so. "She is too little," he said. "How little?" I asked. He indicated a shortish height. "But how old is she?" I asked. "Only

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sixteen," he said. And it was clear that though there was none of that over-emphasized nonsense we call "romance" and "falling in love", all the simple tenderness of his mind was beginning to gather round the "too little" girl of only sixteen. And he would wait, without resort to other women, till she was grown a woman. That is the Punjab peasant.

Americans and Swedes and Frenchmen can say and do what they like in the matter of pre-marital experiences: but out of the practice of the Punjab peasant there is evident a bodily and mental health that is pleasant to see and live with. From childhood up the sexes are thrown together more closely in village life than in any co-educational system. From childhood up they know all about sex in men and animals. Most peasant families live out of doors all day, and sleep in one room at night: but the parent couple preserve a decent modesty. Mothers suckle their children for two or three years: there is no premature exile from the breast. Little boys quarrelling will insult one another's mothers' private parts: and it does not make them indecent in manhood. These simple people are wonderfully free of the modern disease of physical and mental sexuality. (By "sexuality", I mean that half-ashamed, half-sophisticated, unsatisfied craving for sex, or sexual substitutes, that is such a deplorable feature of Western life.) To them the natural urge of sex is a hunger, and they are as far from sexuality as they generally are from greed and gluttony—but unlike hunger for food, wonderful and blessed things can come of sex: so they all revere this power and enjoy it, and go to their marriages in lusty youth, and their hard labouring lives preclude over-indulgence. You cannot call them ignorant or stupid, except in terms of modern materialistic progress: they are not unconscious, like animals: indeed in these archaic men and women is a profundity, a wisdom arising from travail of the spirit working with and through instinct, to which I can give no name more exact than faith, a living sense of God without and within.

So much for women and peasants. Their lot, after all, is comparatively simple. All the complications and difficulties congregate in the intelligentsia and the well-to-do and the city-

SEX AND MORALS

bred, and in those complications I became extremely involved. I may as well write down the tale as it developed.

In the interregnum when the school hung between the out-going and in-coming permanent Principal, the discipline became slack. Our sixth-form boys, the H.S.C. form, were always a source of difficulty, for they were of an age to join the University and live like other students in loosely controlled hostels or unsupervised lodgings, whereas, by the wish of their parents, they found themselves accommodated in a Senior Bungalow. Their time with us as H.S.C. was reckoned to their University years. We needed them as prefects. This Bungalow was supposed to be visited by a master, and they were supposed to write their evening outings, and destination, down in a pass-book for inspection. What it came to was that they were (with justification) not trusted, nor were they controlled.

There came an evening when a senior Sikh went out, and a youth who was jealous of him entered against his name the word "Haramundi". Haramundi lay in the Old City: it is the prostitutes' quarter. Whether this Sikh had himself actually gone to Haramundi, I do not know: it was certainly the case that these senior boys were beginning to go down to the prostitutes, and under European Principals and masters such visits were absolutely forbidden and the area was out of bounds. Upon the return of the Sikh, there broke out a furious row, and in the end it reached the ears of the Indian master, a Hindu, a very nice and conscientious fellow but not strong-minded, who was nominally in charge of the H.S.C. I steered clear and watched to see what would be done. Nothing whatever was done.

Among the Bungalow boys, however, the row spread apace. They took sides, the one side all for liberty and licence, the other anti-immorality. The former wanted to see all regulations in the Bungalow abolished, the latter wanted to see the Bungalow abolished, and the prefects restored to quarters and duties in the boarding-houses. (This has occurred since.)

One day I had a debating class with the Junior VI, and I forget what the subject was: but quite suddenly the boys went off at right angles and we were in the thick of a hot discussion on the awful subject of whether you should or

BURNING MORAL QUESTION

should not go to prostitutes, with a very handsome young gentleman called Iqbal (known for a moralist : he came of a Muslim tribe which expects to furnish many Mullahs, teachers and leaders from its ranks) making a strong stand for total virtue in a speech which he continued manfully in spite of all heckling.

"Look here, boys," I said, when I could get in a word, and had gathered the full gist of their unguarded argument, "this is a most interesting topic, but it hasn't much to do with 'Is India suited to Rule by Democracy?' (or whatever our subject was), and the hour will be over in five minutes : if you'll just come back to the subject in hand and wind it up, we'll discuss the other in our next period."

"Better now than never," said some cynic.

"What's promised is promised," I said ; "it interests me quite as much as you." Back we went to "Is India suited to Rule by Democracy?"

In the next period with the Junior VI, we began where we left off, and talked without reserve. The boys, on finding a woman ready to talk on these subjects without being shocked like their mothers and taking refuge in a thick cloud of propriety, began to speak from their very youthful hearts, and it speedily became clear that, whatever common sense and decency may prevail among the Punjab peasantry, the well-to-do and educated classes were bogged and fogged in a prudery unparalleled, unless the Victorians were like this. Indeed, the more we talked, the more I realized that the Punjab gentility, whether of purse, pen, or property, was exactly what we mean by Very Victorian—or Very Edwardian—the days of strict chaperonage and of extreme outward propriety and secret vice. The boys I was talking to represented a fair section, being of all three creeds, and all of different characters and ambitions.

They knew all about sex, and knew it all wrong. They had learnt it among themselves, or from servants, ready to serve them even to corruption. They came from homes which discouraged them from consorting with village boys (in the case of country landowners) and kept them carefully at home (in the case of town-dwellers). The result was that they were all quite mad about "girls".

"Punjabis can't help following girls, Miss Prior," said Ranjit Singh. "We get so excited if we see a nice girl walking out, we just can't help going after her. It's so rare."

"But you have sisters at home."

"But never any girl friends of theirs."

"We never meet girls socially."

"So we get very excited if we see one."

"But it's a far cry," I remarked, "from gawping after girls, to going down to Haramundi."

"But don't you see, Miss Prior, we want to know what they say and do, and we hear such a lot about we mustn't, we mustn't, we do want to see what it's like."

By "it" they meant sexual intercourse.

"Now, look," I said, "hasn't anyone ever talked sense to you on this subject? Don't your fathers talk to you about Haramundi, and prostitutes, and girls?"

"Good heavens, no, Miss Prior! But we know where they go and what they do, all the same."

"Well," I said, "don't your mothers tell you why it's better to steer clear, or what marriage should be?"

"They'd sooner die," said the boys.

"Our grandmothers tell us we mustn't ever do anything to disgrace our families," said a boy.

"But they won't say what it is we mustn't do, or why," said another.

"Then how do they stop you?"

"They say our fathers and grandfathers never did, so we mustn't," said the boys. They spoke one after another, as one boy, with but one mind between them. "It's—don't—don't—all the time—and no more. And we know our fathers *do*."

"Then what does stop you?" I asked.

"These diseases," said the boys. "We're all terrified of the diseases."

"Well," I said, "d'you think if you met girls of your own sort, socially, you'd be trustworthy, or would you wreck them?"

"Of course we'd be trustworthy!"

"And d'you think if you got girls to go about with decently, it would help keep you off experimenting with the prostitutes?"

PUNJABIS LOVE GIRLS

"I'm sure it would, Miss Prior," they all exclaimed, "else we shall start on prostitutes just out of curiosity and to be men—but all we really want is to see girls. That's all we go to the pictures for—to see girls. We Punjabis love girls. We want to dance with them and play tennis with them. We love girls."

"And what ideas have you got on marriage?"

The answer was extraordinary. Their eyes lit up, smiles appeared and vanished, and they groaned. The brightenings were due to eager anticipations of the tenderness of love and of knowing the practice of sex at last, the groans for the anticipated bondage and dim but mighty battles. They had no idea of what married love can be, though they all wanted charming and educated wives. But they all wanted children.

We talked the whole thing up and down: we talked about the prohibitions, and what were good reasons for listening to them, and what bad, what were the moral and physical dangers of going to prostitutes, what sort of love you might hope to enjoy with a decent girl in marriage, if you had not previously coarsened your taste with harlots and accustomed your body to feel purely physical pleasure and led your mind to think such pleasure too degrading to seek from a wife: and why it was a good thing to let girls get about and to become persons interesting enough to compete with the professionals of the town, in such arts as dancing or singing or free conversation: and the different tasks, and views, and natures of women, and how they were really the other half of the tasks and views and natures of men, and as ready to feel pleasure, passion and love; and the great thing was to make a whole of the two halves, man and woman.

"Well," I said at the end, "do you boys feel it's fearfully queer and wrong to be talking like this to a woman? I hope I haven't said anything to upset you." For I had been speaking of things no decent Indian woman would broach with a man, or a boy. I had no wish to lose their esteem.—Their answer reassured me.

From what I had learnt from the Junior VI, I thought I had better tackle the Senior VI also. I was extremely fond of the boys in the Senior VI: we were excellent friends, and it

troubled me to think of their passing from theory to experiment for want, perhaps, of a word in time. No parent could wish his son to begin to frequent prostitutes. This was a very different proposition, for they were much more young men than the juniors. However I screwed my courage up, and one day I allotted a composition period to the job, and waded in. I told them that I knew what was going on, that I didn't like it, that I was sure their mothers, sisters, and future wives wouldn't like it but would never say why, and if they were interested, I'd like to tell them why for all of us, and afterwards they could say what they thought and do what they must. They said they would be very glad for me to speak, so I went ahead.

They listened with such absolute attention that I did not feel as if I were speaking, I felt as if each mind were close up against mine and the ideas that were in mine became transferred to the others. It was like water sinking into earth and I have seldom felt so deeply moved. At the end they thanked me, and some expressed hearty agreement but most were silent and curiously thoughtful. What I said was quite inadequate, though it was the best I could do, and whether it had any permanent results I don't know, though it was the case that Haramundi, having been brought out into the open and subjected to examination by heart and head, lost some actual and prospective clients. I don't know if the Indian masters ever heard of the unusual subject-matter treated under the head of English Composition, but I never got any back-wash if they did.

My next enlightenment came from Harinder Bal, the boy in the Temple who explained "contemplation" to me.

Harinder was a most attractive boy. He was fifteen years of age, stocky, grey-eyed, curly-haired, fair-skinned, with square-cut, very English features, and in character a complete scallywag. He made an irresistible appeal to my heart. I did not teach him, but I came in contact with him through other work. Harinder Bal was rather a swanky lad, and in time it came to my knowledge that he drank: he used to smuggle bottles of whisky into his room. He had also reputedly taken to other sorts of dissipation. And then I

learned that he was electing to leave school that term, and was planning to go to America to learn to make films, young as he was. I thought perhaps it was time to talk to Harinder Bal, seeing we were friendly, and sent for him.

He said it was quite true that he was leaving school. He was a very rich boy. It was sad to talk to a boy of that age, already, and with good reasons, entirely distrustful of all men and women. His father was long dead, his mother alive : she was fond but of no manner of use, and the only man he loved or believed in was the old Scots engineer who ran his cotton mills and evidently tried to keep the boy in order. He was leaving school because it bored him to go on learning, and he was really keen on films. He wrote Punjabi poetry, and it promised to be the real thing. And it is a tradition in Persia and India, that poets must get drunk in order to be inspired. Besides it was manly to drink. So, as there was nothing whatever to stop Harinder Bal, he drank like a man, though but fifteen. He admitted it bluntly, after a momentary hesitation.

"Harinder," I said, "what was your father like ? Tall or short ?"

"Tall," he said, with instant pride, "a fine height !" His voice croaked : it was breaking.

"And your uncles ?"

"All tall." No enthusiasm here : he hated his uncles, as but for the Scots engineer-overseer, they would have despoiled the widow and orphan long ago. The Scots engineer, alone, in Harinder's experience of men, did his work conscientiously and did not cheat his young master.

"Well, Harinder," I said, "you look as if you ought to be tall : but you're stumpy, aren't you ?"

He looked unhappy : evidently his shortness was a source of shame. He said, yes, he did want to grow tall like his father. So I told him what I thought about the connection between drink and growth, and then said point-blank, "And now, don't answer, unless you tell me the truth : you've started on girls too, haven't you ?"

The effect of this question astonished me. Poor boy, he stared at me as if he were shot dead, and for a moment he intended to lie. How he would have lied ! Then, with a sort of inward relief, he decided not to lie. So he said, "Yes,"

flushed furiously, and then went quite white, a sort of creamy shade.

"You know," I said, "I can't get the hang of this business in the lives of you boys. At home, in England, boys have their slip-ups, but they don't start off at a tender age on prostitutes."

"I never go to prostitutes! Miss Prior, I never go to prosts!" he said with extreme vehemence.

"But you've just said you go to 'girls'."

"But never prosts! Miss Prior, I never go to prosts!"

"Haven't you ever gone off to the bazaar here?"

"No, Miss Prior! Never from here! and besides, I never go to prosts!"

"The girls you go to are in your home-town then?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean they are girls of your own family?"

He looked completely and awfully shocked. "No!" he said.

"Why do you do it?"

He looked astonished.

"What else could you do?"

"Well, take a cold bath, or play more games, or go and do something different, and do it hard."

He smiled.

"You're going down the street, and it comes over you, it's easiest to drop in," he said. "You can't go running home for a bath, or find others and play a game!" He grinned.

"Then they are prostitutes!"

"No!" he cried, "they aren't. I'd never go to prosts!" Again that extraordinary vehemence. He was telling me some sort of truth, it was clear. But I did not understand.

I gave up this conundrum, and set out to explain to him how his indulgence might be expected to involve him in Europe, and the leading differences between European and Indian society in this respect, and what effect it might have on his growth and future fatherhood (like all Indian boys, he already longed with pride for his own children), and since he was a poet, told him what our ideal of marriage was, for it seemed to me to be a thing he could perhaps grasp better than most others: he was, he revealed, absolutely determined to find his own wife, and hidden in this determination lay the

QUESTION OF PROSTITUTES

same secret tender dream as the Junior VI harboured. So I warned him also against the snares of "romance". Poor Harinder ! he really made my heart ache. I suppose he will go to the dogs, and ruin himself with youthful debauchery, for he was rich : and yet he was as unspoilt as a puppy, and loved his mother though he had no intention of listening to a word she said—just as well, perhaps, for she was evidently a don't-mother and certainly lived in seclusion, one who suffers all her life from the ways of the world she has never known, and into which she would never venture. Our interview came to an end, and he shook my hand heartily and thanked me in his husky croak, and the tears stood in his nice grey eyes.

Later I asked my good friend on the staff, Mr. Aftab Omar, for the answer to the riddle of the "prosts" who were yet not "prosts". And it turned out that most well-to-do families, both Muslim and Hindu and Sikh, often have establishments of their own stock, but gotten the wrong side of the blanket, whose women are retained in common, for the convenient use of the men of the legitimate branch. It is, of course, an unmentionable subject, and the "ladies" of the family, of whom their menfolk speak with such pride and respect, and whom they generally treat so carelessly, "know" nothing whatever about it. Poor Indian boys of the upper, richer classes ! they have scarcely a chance to reach manhood unimpaired, or to make the acquaintance of such useful virtues as continence or self-control, or to know the real meaning of love : they are the playthings of the appetite.

I suppose that the news went round, that I was open to conversation upon these tabu topics : anyway, various boys came to me, among them that very handsome youth Ajit Singh, a classmate of Jagannath and the Mairas. He settled down in one of my chairs. Ajit, in a recent play, had been disporting himself as a Captain of Corsairs, with fierce moustaches and imperial beard corked on his perfect pink complexion and brass curtain rings of the largest size in his ears. I asked him the object of this social call.

"I suppose you want to talk about something ?"

"Yes, Miss Prior," he said. "About prostitutes." No beating about the bush.

"Well, what about them?"

"Why shouldn't one go to them?"

"Why should you?"

"Oh, just to see! Just to find out!—just—just—just," said Ajit, in his halting English, eloquently vague, waving his hand.

"Well, if you don't feel driven, you'd be a fool to start out of curiosity. After all, you'll marry quite young: you won't have to wait very long, and it's nicest to love your wife and have it all with her. Or are you of an old-fashioned family and consider your wives wonderful but dirt?"

Ajit sat up indignantly. "No, Miss Prior!" he exclaimed. "We are a modern family! We have a house in Model Town! We live a modern life! We have nothing to do with those old things. . . . I want to learn to dance. Will you teach me to dance?"

They all wanted to dance. They all wanted to play mixed tennis. They all wanted their sisters to take to mixed bathing and invite girl friends. In fact they didn't want the old-fashioned prostitutes in Haramundi at all, with the chewing of betel and *pan* and cardamon, the sweetmeats, the erotic half-screamed songs, the erotic narrative-dancing, the gaudy tinsel and transparent kurtas, the heavy attar-scented atmosphere, the covered bold talk, the rolling, swooning, darting eyes, the great propriety and the actual debauchery. What they wanted was normal girls of their own sort to play and walk and picnic with: and they never met them, either at home or anywhere else. No one made up young people's parties for them. No elder trusted his boys or girls an inch. There were not nearly enough educated girls to go round. Sometimes a young man of means, to whom his parents give an uneducated but redeemable wife, marries her and sends her to school in Lahore before he begins living with her. It is a good arrangement, but what happens meanwhile? The boys go off to Haramundi, or the next best thing locally available.

The girls, as I have said elsewhere, are fine and bonny and fair partners to the boys. But if, as the boys candidly told me, Punjabis think about nothing but girls, the reverse is also true: the girls think about nothing but boys (and babies). While the Punjabi girl who is out in society bears herself with normal

PUNJABI GIRLS

gaiety and sense, the secluded or half-secluded girl is very different. Her conduct is automatically most provocative. She has only to pass a student in the street, and she is all coy giggles, the *dupatta* is drawn over the face only at the last moment, all is covered up except the conscious lines of the body. With women, she is a normal girl, full of sense, nonsense, shrewdness, silliness, clever activity, ineptitude, chatter and competition and laziness : but in the presence of men, she has only one rôle, the fleeing nymph dying to be brought down. The effect of this sort of reaction upon the average young man is of course electrifying. Such girls cannot imagine having any subject in common with a man except sex : and any other sort of girl, in the upper classes, is a rare exception and in a tiny minority. The girls, in their own way, are fully as passionate as the boys. Among themselves they have the most sentimental friendships and go to any lengths giving them expression : but these are only side-lines to their main intention in life.

Indeed, with the boys as they are and the girls as they are, it is not surprising the parents never let them meet : unless the young people have played together from childhood, or are seriously educated to meet, the result could only be crazy elopements (which occur even as things are !). It is a sort of circle : the more you coop them up and prevent natural meeting the wilder both sides become. To keep them apart is merely to keep the powder extra dry, and to ensure the early practice of vice in the boys. It is never realised that to let them play and dance and picnic together, under family chaperonage, would act as a safety-valve, and would even make the "modern" marriages steadier. For alas, it is true the "modern", "romantic" Indian marriages do not all work out too well, precisely because they are often undertaken merely out of false and excited attractions : to such an extent, that they bring discredit on the practice of reasonable freedom between the youth of both sexes, and fortify the arguments of those who wish to retain the bad old mediaeval repressions—dictated marriages, unduly youthful marriages, the practice of *purdah*, the non-education of women, and all the rest of it.

There is a yet darker side : the question of homosexuality.

SEX AND MORALS

This is a great failing in the Punjab, as is only to be expected where natural social intercourse with girls and women is so shockingly circumscribed.

It is the great bogey of better-class Punjab parents. Partly it arises from the natural sentimentality of growing boys, sometimes it is frankly brutal. In its sentimental form, it is one of the most noticeable of natural phenomena. Older Punjabi boys have a great tendency to fall in love with little boys, to have some little precious one among the juniors : they keep places for them beside themselves at sports or private parties, and look after them like pet little sisters. The little boys are filled with hero-worship in return. But it is very easy for this to turn into homosexual practice, and for this reason, junior boys are kept strictly under supervision and apart as far as possible, not merely at school, but also at home. The attention of older boys pleases and flatters them, and for the sake of the flattery they may lend themselves to the wishes of the older homosexual. Generally, it is one or two older boys given to this vice who run through a succession of juniors, as against a dozen simple sentimentalists who do no harm. The sentimentalists all grow out of this homosexual stage : so do most of those who have really practised the vice. Not all, however. No steps too severe can be taken to curb the tendency :—for across the border, in Pathan and Afghan lands, are the dancing boys who are professional catamites, representing a whole class and an institution. In Arabia too the practice is prevalent, and indeed it is a common depravity in Islam, where the women are shut away. In India, feeling is against it, but the tendency is great, and the sharpest watch must be kept, for it ruins the character and often the health of the small boys, and distorts and deflects the social behaviour of the older.

The tendency to take boys has its roots, I believe, in the fact that by this intercourse, diseases are not communicated. Sometimes you may find servants are procuring both boys and girls from outside for the bigger boys who are already set to vice.

However, the business takes all sorts of turns, as the following story will show.

Among the very senior boys was a youth of attractive



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PUNJABI BOYS TAKE KEENLY TO THE SEA

BOY AND BOY TROUBLE

person and charming gifts, quite a wit too, and he was the friend of the Head Prefect, who was much a friend of mine.

Chaudhri wished to return for an extra term. Upon this, certain masters suddenly raised absolute objections, on the grounds of his depravity with great numbers of juniors. They represented that he was for ever lying in wait round the junior house. The question arose, why, if this had been going on so badly in past terms, they had not then reported it to the Principal? Upon this, they hedged. I think they disliked Chaudhri for his satirical disrespect to them.

Chaudhri had visited Lahore during vacation, and had called on me and begged me to speak to the Principal for him: this had been before the masters spoke up. I had had a good deal to do with him the term before, and I am bound to say that he had struck me as being quite free from the taint, though I knew he was attracted to another youth of his own age, and to this youth's little brother.

I was sure the masters were being unjust, and were being moved by some motive other than the pure desire to extirpate vice. The Acting Principal thought so too, but saw no way out, especially as he knew little of Chaudhri and equally little of my colleagues.

However, I went off and called on my friend the Head Prefect Gill, who was laid up with a go of fever. I found him sitting up in bed. He tried to sit to attention.

"Gill," I said, after enquiries as to his health, "I've come about something serious. Now tell me the truth. Is Chaudhri a seducer of juniors? If he is, he must not come back: it will be bad for the school."

Gill nearly bounded sitting out of his bed.

"Miss Prior, he's not," he said. "I'll tell you the real truth. He was, but he isn't any more. We had awful arguments about it in the past—we told him to stop it. In the end he did."

"How long ago?" I said.

"Oh—he hasn't done it for three terms."

"What stopped him?"

"I don't know. Perhaps we did. He seemed to come out of it."

"Well, you know he wants to come back, and now everyone on the staff is saying he mustn't, for that reason."

"Miss Prior, it's not true now. He's changed."

"Maybe, but who's going to believe it after his past? And now he wants to try H.S.C. again and get through this time: he's never been serious before—is that a change too?"

"I dare say, Miss Prior, old Chaudhri does seem to be getting steadier."

"Well, how are we going to prove to the Principal that he's given up seducing little boys? The Principal will be writing to-morrow, and the masters are very strong about it."

"I don't know, Miss Prior. But last term he was helping us in our campaign in the Houses against this thing." Gill was as keen on the School's good name and decency as any English boy.

"All right, Gill; and I believe it, both from what you say and what I saw and heard myself when he was painting scenery with those younger boys: but it will take more than that to counter the masters' charges."

"It isn't fair, Miss Prior! He's reformed; they can't throw up the past against him."

"Can't they," I said. "Give a dog a bad name . . ."

"Wait a minute," said Gill, "I had a letter. Why didn't I think of it! Where is it? It came two days ago——" He rummaged round his pillow, and finally found a letter.

I can no longer reproduce the phrases of that letter, but it was one of the most touching things I ever read. It had been written three or four days ago, before the storm burst. It was entirely spontaneous and unstudied and sincere, and showed what I had surmised—that Chaudhri, with all his charm, wit, variability and spoiltness, was a young man of good heart. It was all about matches and classes and sports—a regular lad's letter—and much of it about "our campaign", reflection upon its success so far and suggestions for further clearing up of the trouble: and then came the part that was so touching. He begged Gill especially to look after the boy, his other friend's little brother. He said he had written to his friend too. He begged Gill to protect the child, to prevent the boys who were doing this from getting hold of him (for he was a very pretty little boy), and to look after him now that he was not

EFFECT OF RARITY OF GIRLS

there himself. He said that he saw how wrong and bad the thing was, and begged Gill again to help his friend look after the boy carefully. It was quite clear that Chaudhri, who was an orphan himself and had no family except a much older brother, had indeed turned from his earlier ways, and it seemed that his very real love for this boy was either the reason or the outcome of his repentance. One does not very often see the solicitude of love written down, nor hear its unsophisticated note : but it was in that letter, as natural as the cry of a bird.

All this, and much more besides, made a very deep impression on me. Looking at these boys, I could *not* come to the conclusion that they differed in nature from our own lads at home. It seemed very clear, that if they could be brought up with good consistent ideas, they could certainly become as decent as the average lad at the average grammar school in England.

It was in my hands to afford them some natural contacts with girls, so I did, with most interesting results. I was getting up various plays at various times, and I borrowed various emancipated girls to play my females. They of course had to come to all sorts of rehearsals, and act opposite my boys, and then had to get home. I had a straight talk with the boys concerned, and told them what I was aiming to do for them, and then we set out on the rehearsals, and after the rehearsals I detailed two or three boys to squire each girl home. They proved, as was to be expected, extremely courtly and absolutely reliable and were very proud of themselves. However, the heart is a susceptible member, and of course they fell in love ; they went down like ninepins. I have never met anything so funny and so touching. They were most candid. I explained that this sort of thing occurs and one falls in and out of love and the first rapture is not necessarily a thing to marry on and one may even not have formed a very accurate idea of the beloved's real character. Most of them accepted this, but one of the nicest of the boys, a Muslim of high standing—he was a lineal descendant of Haroun-al-Raschid, the famous Caliph of Baghdad—became very serious about one of my Muslim heroines, the more so as at home he

was being pressed to marry a girl cousin whom he did not care about.

"Surely it's a bit early," I said, "you're only seventeen."

"Ah, but, Miss Prior," he said, "in my house we are all brought up to be soldiers."

"Well, for goodness' sake," I said, "give your love for Ahmadi time—you may find that in two months it's all fizzled out—that happens—but anyway resist the marriage at home tooth and nail, and wait till you've seen various girls and can make a sensible choice."

He shook his head, and said with seriousness, "How do we know what lies ahead, Miss Prior? It's time I left a son behind me."

This affair very suitably subsided in the end, and he married nobody, but he used to come and tell me of his love. I felt rather like a confidante to Romeo, and ended up by getting extremely fond of the boy myself. He is now studying sheep-farming in Australia.

Another experiment was an All Hallowe'en Party that I gave for the H.S.C. Again I collected all the available emancipated girls. We arranged a treasure hunt all over the dark garden (lamps in the trees) and each boy had a partner to look after, and they hunted in pairs: they also had their fortunes told to them in pairs by a Ghastly Corpse (one of the staff, a Scot temporarily with us) and we ended up with a bloodcurdling ghost story in the firelight. 'This may sound odd: but Indians love a good ghost story as much as we do. We also had a bonfire and baked potatoes in it, and never found them afterwards—which was not surprising as all the little Bahawalpur boys, who had been watching proceedings through the hedge, nipped through and stole them all—as they told me next day. 'This party delighted both the youths and their partners, and again I was struck by the genuine kindness and chivalry with which even the least polished and least accustomed looked after their girls.

And I must say, that in the upshot it seemed much better that they should have their heads full of girls who might be their sisters, or at worst, become their wives, rather than of dark and dangerous dreams of prostitutes. I can quite see that the Punjabi boy is, in matters of the heart, a headlong

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customer, and the Punjabi girl, to judge by the periodic elopements from Queen Mary's College, is a match for him : but I am sure that mixed tennis and properly arranged parties, chaperoned if desired, would do both sides a great deal of good, and it would be no bad thing if Aitchison and Queen Mary's undertook a few such common events—with the parents' consent of course—and upon a clear understanding with the young people, who certainly respond to such trust. Especially as in the nature of Punjabi society, Aitchison boys are in any case destined very largely to marry Queen Mary girls.

I hope, in saying all this, that I have not given the impression that these people are unduly sexual. Indeed they are not so. They are no more so than their cousins of North-western Europe—much, much less so than some, the Swedes for example, or the Scots. Divorce is rare, and illegitimate births very few. Adultery by married women is practically non-existent : the richer sort of husband however does resort to prostitutes. But the irregularities I have described chiefly beset the upper classes, and these classes form a very small proportion of the Punjab population. In spite of the dangers and tendencies I have indicated, one of the most striking things in the Punjabi man and woman is the very real sexual decency of the people. Inflammable and susceptible—yes ; but decent. A young woman at large attracts a good deal of attention, but she is safe and is left to go her way unmolested. I never knew a woman, European or Indian, who did not feel herself safe abroad in normal times, anywhere.

These boys are caught between the old and the new, tangled in old conventions, old shibboleths, old religions, old authorities, looking for new ways, new women, new thoughts, new codes, new morals. How will they ever find the new good, if they cannot find their natural partners to help them through the labyrinth of the new ways ? And how, if they can shake loose of the old system, will they ever avoid the delusion of "romance" ? In it all there is only one advantage, but it is a great one : to every Indian boy, marriage is the proper sphere of manhood, the proper way of living. Which-ever his creed, his middle years, from twenty to fifty, he sees

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as properly devoted to living with his other half, founding his family, and contributing a prosperous house to his people. If he has fully and fairly lived his man's life, he may expect to proceed to the next stage with some hope of success in it also. For after fifty he expects to withdraw somewhat from gain and the world. Ideally, he will contemplate his experience and, by looking inward, will learn to look towards the truth he will seek more nearly after death. His wife, who was his companion in the world, will also walk with him along the inward path of reflection.

Perhaps when they finally "modernize" themselves they will—in spite of the flood of American films—manage to do better than we, who are so corrupted by the fairy gold of "romance".

CHAPTER I I

ASSORTED ROMANCES AND A BACKGROUND

HINDU marriages are far more complicated than Muslim, and I went to parts of two during my time at Aitchison. I say "parts", because these marriage celebrations last several days—three at least—some of the ceremonies taking place in the bride's house and some in the groom's: he has to go to her house and she come to his. Both sides compete to bring in the larger number of guests, which makes it appallingly expensive, for all the guests have to be fed. On your invitation card is stated the day, the hour, and the name of the ceremony to which you are invited.

My friend Mr. Rao asked me whether he might send me an invitation to his niece's wedding. Mr. Rao was a good-natured, simple and cheerful man, short and plump and rather ruddy.

"We have had difficulty," he said artlessly and confidentially. "My niece was clever and went to the University. Her parents are both dead and left little, so we thought 'She must be able to earn', and now we wish very much to marry her."

Clearly there was not merely a family difficulty here, but some division of principles.

"Did she not wish to marry?" I asked.

"Yes, yes," he said, "I mean, she said wait, wait till I am through the University. Then she says, I will take a job. No, we say, we beg you to marry now, later it will be too late. But already she was old; it has not been easy to find a bridegroom."

"But now it is all happily solved?"

"Yes, I think, yes, I think. She does not say no this time, she says very well, very well, I will do it now. We are modern, we have waited till she had finished the University. Now, I am glad to say, I think all is well." Mr. Rao laughed genially, a modern man. "And I am glad to say that the horoscopes match very well." He laughed again, a little less modern.

ASSORTED ROMANCES AND A BACKGROUND

It was quite clear all was not perfectly well. The family were really very old-fashioned. No Hindu woman may remain unmarried. They had seen that a higher education in these days passed for a good dowry, and it commended itself as good business, being more return for less outlay : but for the girl to develop a mind of her own—that was not their bargain at all.

In due course, on a certain evening, I found myself down in the outer city, among the tall houses. There was a courtyard here, with a tree by the road. The tree was festooned with electric fairy-lamps. There was a great arch of greenery and a banner over the entry, "Welcome !" (that one English word which will certainly remain in India). Inside an avenue of electric lights in opal globes on posts led to a marquee, under which were numbers of tables. The court ran irregularly back and in the furthest dark angle, between two houses, a group of ironsmiths were working with a fire and anvil, banging away without the slightest interest in the wedding-party. Guests milled around. Mr. Rao introduced his brother, just like himself, but very fair of complexion, a rosy man. The future father-in-law of the niece also appeared, with the build and exceptionally pink-and-white skin of a Balt from Northern Europe—a man of about fifty, a widower, and, so gossip said, a rare one for requiring virgins : a very repellent little man, with mean watery grey eyes. I was sorry for the niece if she had to live in his house. The Raos made much of their guests and were transparently anxious to swell the little army. We sat down, and so missed the next incident : there was a hubbub, the bridegroom was arriving, on a horse of course. The Indian groom, of whatever creed, has to arrive on a horse, frequently his only feat of equestrianism, and a nerve-racking experience, especially as he is completely blinkered by a veil consisting of strings of jasmine flowers threaded with tinsel and red—not the jasmine we know, but a variety with fat heavy little waxen buds, marvellously sweet-scented, even in collapse and decay. Without any grace of ceremony, the groom passed to some inner part. Presently I learned that as a lady, I could go and see the next part of the marriage.

I followed the current of human beings to the back of the court, where a rickety wooden stair, jammed with people

HINDU CITY WEDDING

going up and down, ran up to a door high in an outer wall. With some misgiving I climbed up. This was the bride's house, and within the groom was fetching his bride.

I found myself in the most appallingly narrow passage, giving on to two poky and entirely unventilated rooms, one smaller, containing a little flat throne roofed with greenery and trimmed with tinsel, and one larger, where were the bride and groom. The press was indescribable, consisting entirely of women and a few youths who were young enough not to be considered men. The heat was terrific. There was babel. There were a few visiting ladies in most lovely diaphanous saris, and a considerable sprinkling of elderly and old women in white cotton, with shorn grey heads off which the cloth occasionally was dragged—the family widows, who never went out of this little dreadful house. A hundred years ago, they would have been burned alive with the bodies of their dead husbands.

In the inner room I at last descried the couple. They did not look happy, at least the bride did not. I have never seen such an expression of bitterly impatient disgust on any face. She was dressed in a purple silk sari with a wide silver border, draped over with flowers, and beside her was the groom in his frock-coat and smart clothes, his face entirely veiled by the nodding strings of jasmine flowers which hung from his silvery crown to his shoulders, only his ears visible. With extreme irritation the poor young woman, her face running with sweat during this drawn-out ordeal in the stifling heat, tore off her own fandangles, without a smile and without a gesture of softness. Various hands turned back the young man's veil of jasmine strings, and out came a boyish, rather silly, amiable face, with large soft brown eyes, a European fairness of complexion, and on the face the sort of smile, half-pleased and half-embarrassed, that was so signally lacking in the girl. Her whole behaviour said pretty furiously, "How long, my God, how long?" and she presented to all the congratulations, touches, handshakes and wreathed smiles of her friends and relations the same demeanour. She looked clever and in other circumstances I could well see her behaving very differently. She snapped something aside to her groom: I should imagine it was, "For Heaven's sake let's get out of

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this now ! ” and she began to push hastily outward, not looking to see what became of him.

I began to shove my way out, down the body-jammed passage, down the tottering stair, past the banging smithy, and rejoined my party.

We went home.

The other wedding I was bidden to was that of the elder son of an old and honoured Hindu gentleman whom I will call Rai Bahadur Kailash Chand. Again was the avenue of lamps and a large number of guests, but they were real friends and at their ease in the pleasant garden. This was a different ceremony, one held at the groom's house, the bride coming to it from her own house, to which on a previous occasion the groom had ridden.

In due course the pair arrived, in the jasmine veils. The bride parted with hers, but the groom retained his till the fire ceremony was over. He wore a high-tiered silver crown, from which hung the jasmine strings, and his extremely fine and burly figure was sheathed in an *achkan* of French gold brocade. He sat down on a rug before the Sacred Fire on the lawn, and together with a Brahman and an assistant, went through a long traditional ceremony, I suppose of prayers and *mantras*, repeating what he was told, and casting elements and other items into the fire as was necessary. No one else had anything to do with this business. I shall long see the sitting figures, gleaming in the dusk, before the fire glowing under the tall trees.

Presently, when all was complete, he retired, and then came out of the house with his new young wife, and people began their congratulations. The young man was a soldier, tall and broad and manly (born a major !), the girl, finely bred and highly educated, was of middle height, round and smooth in figure and feature, wearing a georgette sari in some lovely shade between maize and mossy green, and many jewels of gold and stones, but in excellent taste and of modern Indian workmanship. This young couple had chosen one another, to the great delight of the parents, who were old friends. They behaved with natural dignity, and were both alight with a deep and satisfying happiness. Both were quiet, but faced

PARSI WEDDING

the guests together with inward serenity, he with that expression that comes to men after essential success, she with a perfect mixture of bashfulness and *savoir faire*. Of all the many pleased and happy people there, the couple themselves were the crown, the most pleased and most happy. I don't think they were "in love"—if they were, they were too Indian to show it : but it was plain as a pikestaff that they were both set for love that would last a lifetime.

I saw them again eight months later. The young man was entirely confirmed in his manhood, and I shall be surprised if he does not become a general in time. The girl was extremely changed ; girlhood was gone for ever, she was every inch a woman and he had made her so. She walked out morning and evening and carried his child with the same sweet and appropriate dignity that had defended her as a bride. They were both deeply happy.

I wondered about the other pair.

My mind is sliding back to another Indian wedding I saw long ago, in Bombay—a Parsi one. I went with dear old Parsi friends, our adopted aunts Miss Phiroze and Miss Amy Wadia. They ransacked my wardrobe to find a suitable garment, and finally chose out a long georgette evening dress, in pale colours, with pale-blue bows, which I wore with a hat and neck-fur—incongruously, to our way of thinking : but it looked exactly right among the assembled wedding guests.

The wedding, like all Indian weddings, was being solemnized towards evening. It was held in a great white-walled open court, with a tree in one corner. In the middle, raised above all the innumerable benches, was a dais, with a little sky-blue canopy and white-and-pale-blue striped sides. On this sat the bride and groom, the respective parents on either side. Two Zoroastrian priests officiated, dressed in white, with tall hats of black papier-mâché dotted with gold stars : they read from the Parsi Bible, the Gathas, and repeated prayers, and the couple repeated lines and promises after them : the priests scattered rice over them. The gathering was quiet and attentive. The slanting and sinking sun still shone into the court, on the white and black coats of men, and the ranks of pale flowered-coloured silk saris of the women, apricot,

peach, maize, cinnamon, shell-pink, all with the narrow, twinkling, richly embroidered edgings worn by Parsi women. Slowly the great vault of sky blazed flamingo-coloured, sank to lemon, and began to fill with a wonderful periwinkle blue, till at last the stars shone in sapphire velvet. The ceremony came to its well-timed end : the little dais was empty beneath its sky-blue canopy. The guests departed, except the inner friends who were bidden to the marriage supper.

Now my thoughts turned to a little boy of fourteen, young and small for his age, heir to a small desert principality. His father and mother were both unsuited to rule, and the boy came to Aitchison to be brought up as a normal boy, and among other things, we were looking out for a suitable bride to whom to affiance him : a girl of good blood, royal enough to be a match, a girl conservative enough to go slowly in the very backward State, though advanced enough to help it to develop : and above all of a character to keep the boy stable and assist him to rule seriously. We had a very suitable girl, of a very great ruling house, in view. It was urgent to get the betrothal through, for there were many sharks longing to snap up a defenceless little prince. I was to meet the sharks.

The little boy, whom I will call Zafar Sardar, was to visit his State under the tutelage of one of the masters, who was to look after his masculine requirements, and myself, who was to present him to his numerous aunts, great-aunts, and distant cousins, and prevent those ladies from administering poison in sweets or drinks, to the advantage of their own male circles.

We stayed with the President of the State, a grand old patriarchal Muslim, retired from the Indian Civil Service, engaged with complete devotion and extreme energy in pushing through a progressive programme, embracing everything from education to electricity, canals to Boy Scouts. He was tall, distinguished, heartily humorous, and he told Zafar Sardar tales of his tiger-shooting days. His assistant, the Secretary, was a short man of striking but very quiet manner, a person of integrity and of high breeding. I was not surprised when I learned he was a Mogul and belonged to the house that once ruled Oudh.

The State lay right on the desert. Our programme was an

INDIAN WICKED UNCLES

interesting tapestry of Ford V-8's, lordly camels, biscuit and cloth factories, wild pig in herds, canals, jamborees, hospitals, crafts, citrus farming, the administration of justice, dust, dirt and flies.

My first acquaintance with the sharks was at a lunch, given by the President, at which Zafar Sardar met his four principal kinsmen, all distant uncles or cousins. They had all invited him to eat at their houses. But as some and possibly all would have attempted to poison him, the meeting could only take place at the President's table. I think one of them returned the insult by sending his own cook to cook separate dishes for him personally. A certain Englishman in the Indian Civil Service always alluded to the band as the Five Wicked Uncles. There were only four, but they for wickedness could not be counted as less than five.

Apart from wearing the ceremonial cap, those gentlemen were quite unlike one another.

No. 1 was a small, dapper, neat man, inscrutable and civil. He looked exactly like a Cadi out of a Baghdad tale. His attitude to the boy was politely avuncular. He was the best.

No. 2 was rosy-faced, rather dirty (the true Baluchis wear white and do not think it good form to look spotless, alone of Indian peoples)—good-natured. He talked to Zafar as to a boy, about shooting: but he overdid it, and the boy was not unaware. He wished to make a good impression, so as to be able to turn the future to advantage if possible. He was setting up a lure.

No. 3, also rosy-faced and good-looking, in a very English way, tall and carelessly dressed, was surly, sullen, and blackguardly. He did not trouble to talk at all, and sat eyeing the boy, and seemed to be saying, "If I met you alone somewhere, nobody'd ever find so much as your bones afterwards."

No. 4 was a horrible man. He was hugely and loathsomely fat, with little beastly eyes and a little sharp nose and great sloppy lips. He worked like the villain of the Baghdad tale.

As we sat on the verandah after eating, I watched Zafar Sardar, to see what effect these nightmare men would have on him. He sat there in his metal brocade *achkan*, swinging his little pump-encased feet, scarcely smiling, answering a word or two if it was unavoidable, polite: he was Being Seen. He

seemed to gather no impression at all of his kinsmen. I don't think he saw the sharks : yet he was no fool. He disliked them, indistinctly, as it turned out. I expect he was thinking of tigers and fishing.

Later we made the calls on the Ladies.

The first house at which we called was also the only house which had any sense of home about it and which was not grossly decadent. The actual building was like a barrack. The ground floor was used by servants, the family living upstairs, on a floor consisting of a great space of flat bare roof, the small portion under cover being boarded off into three little rooms, the middle one of which contained a sofa, two modern chairs, and a table. This home was presided over by a fine old lady, of the true Baluch blood, surrounded by shy and respectful younger women and girls. She talked kindly to Zafar Sardar, and here he liked to be, for he chatted happily and naturally. Her son came in, the Chief Magistrate, an Old Aitchisonian, charming and gentlemanly—an agreeable young man. One of the girls was his wife. So (I found out later) was another. He didn't mention her, for Aitchison boys are exhorted to be monogamous : he had taken her out of boredom with the unrelieved life of the desert State. He talked longingly of the School ; and reminisced with the master, on another occasion, about his escapades and his prefectship. Old boys all loved this master. The Secretary came up and sat and talked with these ladies : so I suppose they were a little free, as well as decent, and certainly they had culture and a touch of education—something of that Muslim culture which is so agreeable. We could have accepted sweetmeats or drink safely here : but the report of any such condescension would have reached the others, and raised jealous rows. To avoid those repercussions, we had to cut short our time also.

The next house was the house of the fat man. We reached it by devious paths, scarcely passable by the car, deep dusty alleys between hedges of fierce thorn and clumsy mud walls. The desert seeped into every cranny, and had invaded the man's house also. We were detained at a tent outside the immense mud walls enclosing his house, to undergo a mean and perfunctorily polite entertainment of tinsel begarlanding and quail-fights, the birds being set on by filthy old ruffians

who looked as dirty and evil as their master : and the only English he bothered to utter (he did not attempt much in Urdu or Sindhi either) was, " I am sorry for my poor entertainment, I am poor man." He enjoyed one of the biggest revenues allowed to the prince's family, and was shameless in everlastingly begging for more.

We entered the garden behind the great mud walls. It contained seedy scraggy orange-trees, dust on every leaf, growing in bare earth. We walked on bricks of dried clay, fallen into holes and bumps through years of neglect. Ahead of us rose a ruinous caravanserai, standing on a plinth of broken paving, the ground-floor arches a mass of firewood and rubbish, with one or two figures in rags pottering about. We went upstairs, and came into a room containing a low dais covered with a dirty white cloth : into the dirty white walls was let a single set of shallow shelves, with no attempt at form : there was no other furniture nor an object of any grace anywhere.

Zafar Sardar was led up to a stout elderly lady, the fat man's wife, and the whole place filled with a rabble of dreadful women. They all tried to touch the boy : some laid hold of him and dragged him to their aged bosoms—all the women were dressed in shapeless white cloth garments in the Baluch style, all dirty—and raised maudlin howls and wails over him. I imagine they were calling down blessings on the future Ruler. Poor Zafar understood as little as I did, as they all spoke Sindhi. Then he was sat down on the edge of the dais by the leading lady. She made no attempt to talk to him or of him, no attempt whatever to guide or civilize the occasion. She sat and looked : he sat and was looked at : the Presence was under her roof : he allowed it. He swung his legs, looking absent-minded and rather miserable, in his fine little metal brocade coat and his clean *salwars* and neat shiny black shoes. He was simply Being Seen. The crowd of hags (there was scarcely a young woman present, and no children) now squatted down, fastened forty or so eyes on the poor boy, and proceeded to pass remarks. The chatter ran, " Look at his coat. Look at his shoes. Look at his face. He has no hair yet. Look at his skin. Is he like his father ? Will he be like his grandfather ? Will he be like The Good One ? He is

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small. He is well-made. Is he potent? Is he a virgin?" etc. etc.

The fat uncle came and joined us for five minutes, talking a little English, but as he had no idea of the outer world and no idea of the State either and no idea of anything but day and night, water and earth, male, female, old, young, food, sleep and pleasure or its absence—conversation was difficult. We had the usual embarrassing time refusing to eat or drink, and departed.

Downstairs the Secretary was growing restive and wondering if the worst was in process of occurring.

Our final appointment of consequence was with the ladies of the dapper uncle who looked like a Baghdad Cadi. This was the richest and most gentlemanly of the relations. His house was in the town, and to get to it, we had to go past the edge of the true desert, which lay golden and blazing beyond the last high flat crags of rock, each surmounted by its little sugar-icing summer palace, colour-washed in gay stripes and chevrons, white, sky-blue, pink, mauve, primrose, with toy crenellations and fretted upper walls.

We turned into the town, the car scarcely able to get past the lanes. At many turns were gangs of men, standing to see their little prince go by.

We drew up by a wide space, in which stood one of the sugar-icing palaces, of imposing size. We went in. I don't know how many doors there were round the four walls of the lofty hall—ten I should think—each hung with net curtains drifting in the stir of air. A fine enormous carpet covered the centre of the floor and at each end stood a collection of about five chiffonier sideboards, all mirrors and knick-knack shelves, and down each side were ranged several sofa suites. We sat a few minutes, Being Seen by the gentry. Then, on our way out to see the ladies, we were kept a few minutes on the handsome verandah, seated on a sofa, Being Seen of a lower kind of subject.

Again, we had to watch quail-fighting, this time on a handsome rug, the wretched silly little birds being enticed on with a sweet paste between the fingers of their keepers, till each met the other bird: then the fingers of both keepers were withdrawn and it was hoped the birds would fight. The

ANOTHER HAREM

birds had no wish at all to fight. Generally they hopped away, looking in puzzled greed for the vanished morsel. Sometimes they gave an angry chirrup and there was a moment's measly scuffle. One looked up from these sparrow-sized birds to the men standing and squatting round, some of them persons of rank tidily dressed, and all the others, retainers and hangers-on, in various degrees of dirt and rags, many faces alight and the fierce mouths open with a warlike shout—and then you saw the sycophant's smile and the sycophant's eye slide up to gather a meed of approbation from the master above.

Our hosts having done their duty of giving a quail-fight, and we ours of watching it, we now went to call on the ladies.

They lived, after Baluch tradition, in a separate establishment across the road. Their courts were approached by an elaborate sort of dog-leg tunnel between mud-walls. We came out into a great space, full of desert sand, with a few buildings dotted round the sides.

First we went into a low poky house on the right. Here we met an incomprehensible number of Senior Ladies and Junior Ladies—wives 3 and 4 were never introduced—and of course there was a large rag-tag of entirely unexplained ladies : but as this was the home of the wives, the concubines did not appear and had no right to see the head of the princely class. We were taken to see the Old Palace—a three-floored building with outer verandahs and rooms built round a central room unlit except by doors, furnished with a carpet, a centre table and a set of drawing-room chairs, less grand on each floor—the bottom table and chairs were of wrought silver. We were taken to see the Summer House, a large hall on the ground level, a shallow pool in the centre, walled with greenish mirror, dim and cool, to be entered by one double door only, the many other doors blocked with thick screens of cus-cus root : these, when the furnace heat of summer outside should reach 125° or 130° in the shade, would be kept wet, and the air inside by evaporation would be cooled down to 80° .

After this we went and sat on a swing-seat in a verandah : the uncle and his sons came in and paid deferential respects to their wives and mothers, bowing with humility before them. Zafar Sardar sat between the two chief ladies on the swing-seat

and Was Seen. They also talked only Sindhi. He swung his legs but looked a little less bored than usual, for he enjoyed the leisurely swinging. He looked coy and embarrassed, for the two ladies were as coy as girls themselves and with grotesquely rolling eyes edged closer to sit next the royal snippet. (Eye-rolling is a form of polite grace.) The other women stood or squatted in front of the swingers, all gazing and passing remarks, but not blatantly: this house had, if no culture, civility. When Zafar had Been Seen enough, we took our leave, after, of course, the usual difficult struggle over food and drink.—When one realizes the hospitable significance of giving and accepting food and drink in an Oriental house, one can form some idea of the extreme pressure of these offers and the extreme rigidity needed to withstand them. To refuse food and drink is great incivility. And yet we could not chance the very real danger of poison for the boy. This danger had really lain in the fat man's house, and of course in those houses we avoided.

I had never seen such ladies. They too were like something out of an Oriental tale. They were not of the Baluch type, for they had much Sindhi blood in this house: they were short, plump, sloe-eyed, not beautiful. They wore the Sindhi costume: immense peg-top trousers, and above it a transparent *kurta* of all but invisible silk muslin, and a shoulder-scarf of the same. The hair was plaited in two plaits springing from above each temple, hanging down the sides of the face. The shoes consisted of a sole with great pom-pom toes.

The women were manifestly polite creatures, but it was equally obvious that their one aim and object and weapon in life was their physical allure. They were unspeakably coy, with simpering smiles, and ogling eyes and swaying hips. Breasts and belly were covered by the *kurta* but in a way to leave them more than revealed, the trousers being roped over the hip-bones and forward below the bulge of the belly. In spite of their one art and hope being the cult and exercise of their bodily attraction for their lords, they were of an extraordinary innocence. I could imagine these women deploying all the arts of a Circassian-trained concubine, yet with the hearts and minds of little five-year-old girls. I noticed that the breasts of the wives told a tale of never having suckled,

HAREM ATTAINMENTS

and there was only one baby to be seen, and that a toddling girl : enquiring about this afterwards, I learned that these women never suckled their young as it was held to spoil their figures, and boy babies were removed from them at the age of one year, in Baluch style, over to the men's courts, where they were from babyhood up initiated into all manly pursuits and vices natural and unnatural. Over there lived the casual women, the dancing-girls, and seldom were these brought over to be established among the mothers and wives, and yet it had happened, and hence the degeneration into Sindhi types and looks. These ladies, I learned, were too royally lady-like to sweep, to clean, to cook, to suckle, to rear (now and again they did breed), to sew, to knit, to read, or to go anywhere. They did not even read the Koran, which most orthodox Muslim ladies of standing achieve, after a fashion. They lived a life unreflecting as animals, seeking only shady spots and cool places, accepting their husbands, consuming food and drink : indeed, with their gentleness and kindness and with flashes of jealousy or mild discontent and their unconscious resignation, their petting joy in Zafar Sardar, they reminded me of nothing so much as a flock of lambless ewes.

And yet they were figures of dignity. When the husbands or sons approached the ladies, whether their own nearest related, or the further kin, they placed their hands together and bowed humbly to them, with a gesture of touching their feet and the earth they stood on. As they did it, you perceived the gentle nonentity acquired for an instant the stature of this dignity, as if another spiritual figure grew out of her, something you could almost see, tall, shrouded, great, gracious, universal. The men were not saluting the individual : the woman before them was scarcely so far developed. They were saluting the Mother, the Genitrix.

These desert ladies, in their cumulative effect, filled me with horror. Even the President's own wife was a lady who could not or would not be seen, though I played badminton (in the courts of seclusion) with his two daughters and Zafar, who was still young enough to be allowed to see any women. His two girls were at Aligarh University, and still secluded, though their sisters had married modern men and left purdah.

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Their confinement irked the girls exceedingly and they were bitter about it.

One day my impressions about the truly terrible state of development of the female sex in the State came to a head and I boiled over, in the presence of the President, the Secretary, the master, and the boy. Until I began to talk, I did not know I was possessed by so much horrified indignation.

The President admitted that something needed to be done, for it was clear that all his reforms could come to nothing as long as the men and boys retired daily and hourly, regardless of the greatness or poverty of their house, to this self-same background of animal woman whether wife or whore. I never saw any place in India where fewer women were to be seen up and down the streets, not even little girls : nothing but men and boys : it was remarkable. And the men looked dangerous.

The Secretary was keen to get something done.

But both agreed that what was needed was a married couple—say a doctor and wife. Even then . . .

This astonished me. I asked why it must be a couple.

"Because," said they, as with one voice, "a woman could not live alone here."

"Why not?" I said.

"Impossible," they agreed, and their prim manner betrayed what it was they refused to say.

"What about an Englishwoman?" I said. "Say a woman like me? Would she not be safe—with a guard?"

"No," they said, after a moment's hesitation.

I wanted to get the thing clear.

"Would she be murdered or abducted?" I asked.

"Any woman alone would disappear," said the President, shaking his grizzled head, and laughing slightly.

"She would have to have a protector," said the Secretary.

"Yes, a protector," agreed the President.

That is to say, she would have to be possessed and enjoyed by a man who would keep off other men—either a husband or a lover.

"Is this place very immoral?" I asked.

They smiled.

"Immoral—yes : yes, indeed," they informed me. "You see, women are very short here : there are nothing like enough

UNMARRIED HINDU GIRL

to go round, and the men are very violent indeed—it is a bad life, they stop at nothing.”

No wonder the privileged owners of plural women had those huge high walls round the women's courts !

Even the President and Secretary lived with armed guards posted round their own walls.

Every house a fortress.

In that place, I struck a level very near the bottom of civilized society—indeed, when I think of the fat uncle and the quail-fighting and the Sindhi female attire, I am not sure it was not the bottom : but, to be accurate, it was only the lowest of what I saw, far below the archaic peasant. East and south, in Hindu India, are to be found much more complicated depravities, where endless hours, processions of vacant hours of moist vital heat, drive the degenerated men of any means at all to try every contortion that can be devised by a debased religion, by laziness, and by lust ever newly galvanized, to kill the horror of time.

And here, to end up with, are two little modern Indian romances, one Hindu, one Muslim.

She was of middle Hindu caste, a Punjabi girl of some education. She could sing and dance and recite. She had refused to be hustled into a marriage. She would be a pioneer : she would have a Career. And, as she was charmingly pretty and graceful, that career should be a poetic one : she would be a film-star.

But alas, in India this profession is very largely a profession for prostitutes.

Her family put a stop to that.

And she had not the toughness of character to be a pioneer. So at twenty-seven or eight, she found herself charming, cultured, and staying with this or that married sister, belonging nowhere, getting nowhere—just that unheard-of thing in India, an unmarried Hindu girl. She had little or no dowry. But she had been delightfully pretty. All her friends whispered that the “career” was a mask : the truth must be that she was mis-made in her womanhood. She heard of this gossip, and was terribly upset.

I left Lahore for a week, and on my return, she was

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gone. Gone with a husband ! Married and gone all in two days !

He was a family connection, of her own caste, who had gone trading to East Africa. There he was making money hand over fist—but there were no wives of Punjabi stock, and of his own caste, available. For years he could not get home, and he was getting on himself—well over thirty—with no wife and no children. He had a sudden chance to come to India, on a business trip : and true to his blood, he dashed up north to snatch a Punjabi bride. And *that* wasn't easy, for there was no time for people to find out anything about him, or investigate his position and prospects, and unless he struck it lucky with people who knew his family, he was scarcely likely to be entrusted with anybody's girl : and besides if he was physically sound, why wasn't he a husband and father long since ?

But he did strike it lucky. He struck the brother-in-law of the little would-have-been film-star. She was fresh : she was cultured : she sang and could dance : she was pleasantly modern. The brother-in-law made up the dowry. It was an excellent bargain all round. No long-drawn-out wedding here. The essential ceremonies can be performed quickly enough—all you need is a fire and a Brahman. They were married the same evening and departed together next day.

She came up north again to collect a few things, and friends saw her for one afternoon. She was very pleased and happy.

She has written from Africa : all seems to be well.

And here is the other romance, even briefer.

One day, during the long interval for midday dinner, there wended in to Aitchison garden a man, a Mullah, and two shrouded females, a taller and a smaller. It was the after-lunch hour when the boys lounged and rested. So many parties of family people, teachers and servants, lived in the compound, that such a group was not remarkable.

The little cortège asked its way to the rooms of a certain Muslim boy. They disappeared into his rooms and emerged again in about ten minutes, the man, the Mullah, and the two shrouded females. They wended their way out.

But the boy they left behind them was now a Married Man.

It was (as it turned out) a marriage the School authorities

“ LOVE COMES AFTERWARDS ”

would have tried to prevent, boldly forced through for the sake of a union of properties.

No love entered into either of these romances. “ Love,” they say in India, “ comes afterwards.”

Not always, perhaps : but certainly most couples are much attached to one another.

CHAPTER 12

POLITICS, HIGH AND LOW

I CANNOT attempt to do more than give a general impression of Punjab politics here. I am not competent to go into detail: and in any case, the impressions of an ordinary onlooker will probably be as much as the ordinary reader is willing to absorb!

As I said earlier in this book, the Punjab is very much of a land apart. It has not the old East India Company background. It is not an old Province, the scene of many old campaigns, and of European rivalries, inheriting old bitter-nesses, inhabited by wily and highly developed races, as is the case with Bengal, or Madras, or the Bombay Presidency. It was conquered once and for all late in our Indian career from the Sikh ruler, Ranjit Singh. That was a fair war, fought between men: the Sikhs were beaten (only just) and took it like men, losing the war but not their dignity: both sides respected one another. The Punjab Government, fortunately remote from Calcutta, was able to make a clean start and go ahead without interference. The job to be done was a practical job: not trade, but agriculture. The land was largely a desert. Its wonderful increase of water, cultivated acreage and population was achieved in the best British way: without theorizing, as pioneers work, by practical experiment.

The rest of India considers the Punjab remote, wild and bumpkinish. Behind this fortunate disregard has gone on, undisturbed and peaceful, a very happy development—something quite unparalleled elsewhere in India. It has been a co-operation between two mutually acceptable peoples. For when I say that we English have all always liked, and most of us have really loved, the Punjabi people, I am not talking sentimentally, but saying a true thing. And though I cannot speak for their side, I can certainly say that there has been much friendship manifested. I think they really did like us. I know that they were dismayed and shocked at our pulling out. They could not see why on earth we should. They were

ORIGIN OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

horrified. The Punjab never felt that it belonged to India east and south : and I think I am stating it fairly when I say the Punjab never wanted the British to go. Nor, I believe, did the Sikhs, or the Rajputana States, or most of that India which is now Pakistan : excepting the North-West Frontier Province.

I can give only the merest sketch of the general situation.

In 1935 was passed the Government of India Act. This conferred a very substantial measure of autonomy upon all Provinces, and provided machinery for the eventual Federation of States and Provinces in a central Government of India, which would handle such matters as defence, foreign affairs, communications, currency, with the consent of the federating units. This hope, of course, could only be achieved if communal agreement were achieved. As we know now, communal agreement was not achieved ; hence Pakistan and Hindustan and their diverging policies.

Each Province had a British Governor, who acted as a " constitutional " head, and used his power of Veto only very sparingly, and only in behalf of certain matters of " special " responsibility—Protection of Minorities, Service Rights, and so forth.

The major political parties decided to work Provincial Autonomy for what it was worth, even though there was no political or communal agreement at the centre. General elections took place on this basis and brought the Hindu Congress Party to power in most Provinces of British India. Their policy appeared to be to weaken the Constitution from within. Just when war was again threatening, Mr. Gandhi, with his usual political acumen, called the Party out of office and plunged India into yet another bloody Civil Disobedience movement.

The Muslim League, originally invented by Mr. Jinnah to off-set Mr. Gandhi's Congress Party, had managed to form League Governments only in Bengal and Sind. The North-West Frontier Province, under the leadership of the " Khan Brothers ", Abdul Ghaffar Khan, " the Frontier Gandhi ", and Dr. Khan Sahib, brought the Province under Congress, the link not being any mutual love but a common wish to remove the British. This Province wished to see the British go,

POLITICS, HIGH AND LOW

because the population is largely a Pathan population and their sympathies lie with the penned-up and ever turbulent trans-frontier tribesmen.

Politics in the Punjab were influenced by the soil. It is a farming province. It was neither League nor Congress, but a Province of big and little landholders (called Zamindars, a sort of squirearchy and yeomanry, and not to be confused with the iniquitous ex-tax-gatherer Zamindars of Oudh and Bengal). The overwhelming party, founded by the late Sir Fazl-i-Hussain, and brought into power by Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, was the Unionist Party. This party, very suitably, represented the dominance of agricultural interests over those of the urban trading classes. It was a Zamindar coalition with the Muslims under Sir Sikander, Hindu Jats under Sir Chotu Ram, and the Sikh Khalsa Nationalists under Sir Sundar Singh Majithia. Neither the League nor Congress, both city growths, could gain representation on the Provincial Legislature in the face of this combination based on the Province's greatest interest, the Land.

The Unionist Government excellently suited the temperament and interests of the Punjab, and permanent officials of the Civil Service, both Indian and British, had no difficulty in serving its Ministers. Though the Muslims were the majority community, the weightage given to minorities, especially the Sikhs, made it impossible for them to rule as a single party and stable government could only be achieved with the co-operation of the Sikhs and Hindus. This co-operation of landowners was not at the expense of an exploited peasantry. A very large proportion of the Punjab peasantry owned its own land, and all of it lived in a style better than that of the peasant Spaniard, for example. The Coalition brought great advantages, and Sir Sikander's lifetime effort was to keep the Muslim League at arm's length, for a Muslim reaction was bound to splinter the very prosperous Punjab. This effort was maintained by Sir Khizr Hayat Khan (Sir Sikander's successor, not his son), a Provincial statesman of great dignity, incorruptible integrity, and devotion to the true interests of his native Province. All parties and leaders trusted him. Sir Khizr belongs to a great Punjab tribe, the Tiwanas, who claim Macedonian origin from Alexander's time. In person Sir

PUNJAB POLITICS

Khizr is very tall, olive-skinned, dark hair parted in the middle, and in features like a member of the Spanish Royal Family : he is affable and impressive. Politically he was only overwhelmed by the communal passion unloosed by the British decision of March, 1947, to transfer power in August, 1947, which fell upon all India like a bolt from the blue.

The Sikh community form one of the most obvious and important features of the Punjab. The Sikh Nationalists (Khalsa) figured in the Punjab Coalition : upon the decision to transfer power, this party was merged in the Akali Party (Shromani Akali Dal), the organization which earlier had reformed the Gurdwaras. The Sikh colonies fall into certain regional groups but in the East Punjab lies the great Sikh State of Patiala, under its own independent Prince. This State forms the lodestone and hope of the Sikh community at large : for Sikhism is a militant faith and a militant party and every Sikh is looking for the re-establishment of the kingdom of the great Ranjit Singh. For the moment they have failed in this, but they are both the sword-arm and the terror of Hindustan. Perhaps the most notorious Sikh politician is the apostolic-looking Master Tara Singh, whose utterances form a useful excuse for Sikh demonstrations. An Arora Sikh of Pindi and a former schoolmaster, his observations lack import and he has no political sense, but as a political weather-cock and communal agitator he has had great success. Congress have now put him in jail. Certain other groups of Sikhs have strong Congress and Communist associations.

Another notorious former member of the Education Service, Allama Mashriqi, a half-crazed megalomaniac, founded the Khaksars, a sort of Muslim private army, in imitation of Hitler's Brownshirts. The Muslim League, which had its own League National Guard, would not tolerate this bullying and parading communal organization. As an emblem of social service, the Khaksars carried a spade which was, however, razor-sharp. The Khaksars were never a party.

Punjabi Hindus were not very actively political. Except for the sweeper castes, they were all in trade and middlemen's jobs : many also in professional and clerkly work, the Brahmans being in these two callings almost to a man. Nearly all the Government clerking was done by Hindus (for the

POLITICS, HIGH AND LOW

Muslims are not bureau-minded and think clerking sissy work)—which is one of the reasons why the Pakistan Government has been rather slow in finding its feet: all the Punjab army of clerks vanished like snow and Pakistan was left facing forests of uncharted files and wastes of correspondence. Punjabi Hindus of course had an eye on their Congress co-religionists eastward. Secretly they all wished the British off the scene: but they also knew perfectly well that if we were to go, they would get short shrift—so as Punjabis they in point of fact wished us to stay. Besides, prosperous tradesmen the world over know that they are the first to lose by disturbances: Punjabi Hindus therefore might dream secret and perilous dreams, but they sat very tight and quiet. Among the city Hindus, however, worked a dangerous, semi-secret, and seditious organization, the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh, affiliated to the Hindu Congress Party, or else a branch of it. Ostensibly this organization was a sort of athletics network—there are many such wrestling and gymnastic clubs in North-west India—but actually it was a subversive political net, quite unscrupulous and extraordinarily adept at camouflaging or removing evidence of its political activity.

The Sikh and Hindu interests made up rather less than half the Punjab; and while of course the Sikh and Punjabi Hindu will always stand side by side if it comes to religion, they are substantially divided politically, on account of the landed interest of the Sikhs, and the Congress interest of the Hindus.

Communism is well entrenched in India. Though it is difficult to see how any Hindu can be a Communist, social misery under the Hindu system, and workers' misery under the ancient money-lending system, or modern factory system, are great: and wherever there is misery or discontent, and no enlightened contrary gospel, there is a good chance for Communism. Moreover India suffers from a more than usually irresponsible sort of intelligentsia to man the command.

The Communist Party of India is as old as most European Communist Parties and has in its hierarchy the usual galaxy of Moscow-trained stars. It is interesting to note that both Mr. Nehru, now virtually a reactionary dictator and King-maker and un-maker, and his famous sister learned their revolutionary art in Moscow. Up to 1947 Communism in

PUNJAB: COMMUNISM AND WAR EFFORT

India was largely centred in the towns, with its headquarters in Bombay, with Mr. P. C. Joshi as Secretary-General. There were the usual "front" and "mass" organizations. The famous Meerut conspiracy, featuring Messrs. Pollitt, Pratt and Bradley along with the Indian Comrades, first revealed to the public at large the extent of Party activities.

The Punjab presented something of a special problem to the Communist Party. However there were willing workers. The Ghadr Party of America—consisting of Sikh emigrants—had placed themselves at Moscow's disposal and from them recruits were trained and infiltrated into the Punjab from 1934-8. Their agitation resulted in the formation of the Sikh Kirte-Kesan (Workers' and Peasants') Party. As these members had difficulty in accepting the leadership of Bombay Hindu intellectuals the movement in the Punjab and north-west lacked cohesion. It was most successful in the Jullundur and Hoshiarpur regions, where holdings were small and un-economic and where there was a large influx of emigrants with foreign experience. In general the Punjab is not sympathetic to Communism because the peasants have substantial holdings, and in Pakistan the effect of Communism is so far negligible.

In India at large, following the encouraging examples of China and Burma, Communists are now aiming to convert the countryside, especially in Madras. Meanwhile the domestic policy of Hindustan is, for its own sufficient reasons, which are not the same as ours, now firmly anti-Communist and in some Provinces the Party is outlawed.

It is also interesting to note that Hindustan has now more political agitators lodged under lock and key in prison, than the British ever had at any time.

During the War, the Punjab was wholeheartedly with us. It produced regiments of volunteers: it worked: it saved: it bought War-Loan: women responded, came out of their homes to work in clubs and circles: and there was a sudden extraordinary burst and spread of the art of knitting. It came in from remote villages and even chuprassis knitted—which may sound trivial, but considering India it betokens a significant revolution. There were no mutterings, no risings, no anti-pathy, no advantage taken of the predicament of Britain, no

POLITICS, HIGH AND LOW

attempt to screw out concessions. There was response and help.

Many other parts of India co-operated freely in the war : but no other region co-operated with the extraordinary wholeheartedness of the Punjab. This co-operation brought its own rewards. Detachments on volunteer-recruiting approached all villages with vans containing exhibits and documentary films : it was a powerful eye-opening to the village. Recruits were taken, raw, stupid, ignorant, dirty, and gangling : in six months they were upstanding, clean, bright, bigger, heavier, clear in the wits, learning letters and beginning to read. Their record in the War was magnificent ; they were used economically, and their losses not very heavy ; and they were, in my time, returning to their villages having lost a host of superstitions and bad practices, and full of the machinery they had seen, and, in particular, full of new ideas on farming—in which respect they had learned a tremendous amount from the small-farm art of the Italians.

This immense army of men cannot but act as leaven : had their home-coming been used, what a wonder might have been achieved in the Punjab.

It was an opportunity we threw away.

The Hindu Congress Party and Hindustan (Bharat), though not able to raise much following in the Punjab, greatly affect its modern political history, and deserve attention here.

The more intelligent portion of the public at home in England—perhaps “intelligent” is a misnomer : I mean the sort of people who govern us and fill the Universities and many religious bodies—have been aware for years that India has been crying out to govern herself. It is not, and never has been, appreciated that this is a Hindu cry and a minority cry. The Hindus in India are in a majority of two to one : but the vocal ones are a minute minority among Hindus. This Hindu minority claims to interpret the will of the speechless masses, and it goes under the name of “Congress”. (The term does not represent a Parliament, as is the case in America.)

It interprets the will of the masses in two ways. Six or ten unemployed partially educated University men, bearing cases full of white caps, descend, in white caps themselves, upon a

THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

village, provided it is not uncomfortably far from a railway or motor-road (for these gentry do not wish to waste time or put themselves to any trouble): they harangue the crowd that gathers and gawps at them: ask them if they would like to wear the white hats and stand by the Holy Gandhi (the caps are not refused, but not worn, and of course all Indian peasants will lend ear to any sort of alleged saint): two hours later the team departs. Nothing more happens, except that this village is now claimed for Congress.

If, at a later date, it is required to convince a British member of a Commission that the villages are behind Congress, he will be taken to such a village. For five rupees a man will learn by heart what he is to say, and say it off, apparently impromptu, before the guileless Commissioner: and the village will turn out to see the free show, in the white caps if suitably solicited. It is easy to keep this kind of Commissioner on the rails as he has to use an interpreter. The sort of Englishman who knows the language and people is not invited to these little parties. It would never do to have someone there who could really see and ask unguided questions, and find out the truth.

The other way in which the will of the people is ascertained is as follows: a great spell-binder (such as the late Gandhi, or Pandit Nehru) goes to speak in a great city. A great crowd assembles, some of it honest, but a great deal of it consisting of those persons who sit idle for hours in the bazaars. Nothing in the world is easier than to rouse the emotions of Indians and sway an Indian mob: it is far easier to sway than a German mob, and we all know what Hitler and Goebbels achieved there. Persons who are dirty, hot, and poor because lazy, will naturally follow anyone who promises them soul-elevation plus comforts for which they need not work, wedded to an external target for hatred which can be blamed for all the ill-results arising from one's own character. In Germany it was the Jews, in Russia it is the capitalists, in Congress India it was the British.—This city-mob is easily set afire: it becomes emotional: it shouts: it puts on its free white caps: its will has not been interpreted but breathed into it: it is Congress-minded.

The people leading the Congress Party are practically all Hindu. Nevertheless it has always had Sikh, Christian and

Muslim members : but they are not very numerous, and they do not abide in the Party, even such few as they are. Congress leaders consist chiefly of persons who have not made a success of any job : “ failed B.A.’s ”, and such-like—people who are cleverish, and have sat through some part of a University education. Some however are persons of real brains and disinterested character, such as Nehru : these generally are wealthy men of private means. Money pours in from such people as Birla or the Patels, the money-barons, the owners of chains of mills or firms or shops. The leadership falls between the two exceedingly astute classes of Brahman (as Nehru) or Bunnia (as Patel). You do not find the Kshattriyas (the warrior Hindus, Rajputs and such like) mixed up in this game, nor persons of Sudra (menial) castes : the one despises it and the other is despised. The object of the Party is not (as is given out) the making of a modern and decent India : it is the firm retention of the Old Order, in which the Brahmans will rule spiritually, Bunnias get rich quickly, and all workers work humbly but harder than ever before for the benefit of Brahmans and Bunnias.

This you may know for certain, if you did not before, by looking at the record of Hindustan since it became independent. It is a story of power-politics and chicanery, quite naked. It is the story of a materialistic and totalitarian State. Its spectacular international conduct as a reconciler must be taken at face value only. Such efforts are well worth engaging in for the sake of increasing the international “ face ” and bargaining power of Hindustan. It must be seen against the domestic life of Hindustan. At home, there is no tremendous spiritual campaign of reform afoot, such as would be needed to redeem Hindu India out of the stagnancy of ages of superstition. The Ruled have even ventured to complain loudly that since the British went, rule has become chaos, and that the Indian administrators have been feathering their own nests to an unheard-of degree : this protest was repressed and smothered but not before it got into *The Times*. Even that highly ambiguous saint (and very cunning politician) Mr. Gandhi has been murdered.

With this Party many Hindus had no sympathy—no Hindu

POLITICAL MEANINGS OF WORDS

of fighting race cared for the coalition of their age-long rivals and enemies, the priest and money-lender : the great army of Government clerks kept out of politics : the menial castes knew they had little to hope for from them : the great army of agriculturists paid scarcely more attention to them than did their cattle.

But they had behind them—indeed they *were*—all vocal Hindustan—the sentimentalists, the idealists, the half-educated, above all the discontented : the writers, journalists, artists, actors, nationalists of all the Indian nations, Bengali, Madrassi, Mahratti, and so on—all the non-Government placed B.A.'s and failed B.A.'s, all those who stood a chance to snatch a job or a good gobbet during a turnover of power.

This vocal choir, owing to our education policy, had learned to express itself in Western terms. It talked of democracy, self-expression, Home Rule, emancipation, citizenship, freedom, progress. The intelligentsia of Britain, our sentimentalists, idealists and theoreticians, hearing these words and knowing nothing at first hand, thought the Hindu intelligentsia meant by these words what we mean by these words. Their naïve souls were deceived by the first rule of the clever Indian seeking his object—to say what you think the Dispenser of Bounty wants to hear. How could we know that in Hindustan Democracy means Rule by Brahman-cum-Bunnia : Self-expression means the Right to Get Rich and Get the Top Place : Home Rule means the Right of Hindus to rule the Whole Roost, including Muslims, Parsis and Sikhs : Emancipation means the Right of the Ruling Castes to Trample on the Faces of the Menials for ever : Citizenship means the Right to Allot Remunerative Posts to Relations : Freedom means the Right to be Served Hand and Foot by Persons of Inferior Birth without Paying Them : Progress means the Absolute Securing of the Hindu System as it was before the British (and Islam, and Christianity) upset its unquestioned working.

No wonder we were taken in. But the Muslims were not.

CHAPTER 13

THE BALLOON GOES UP

THE British Socialist Party, in their handling of India, appear to have worked upon the principle that no good Socialist should at any time give ear to those who knew India by virtue of a lifetime spent in her service.

On 20th February, 1947, the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, announced, with apparently no notion of the issues or even the plain work involved, that Independence should be granted "not later than June, 1947". By June, however, it became clear even to the Socialist Party that more than a little simple wand-waving was involved, and on 6th June it was compelled to declare the date advanced to August 15th.

Under the British, these three communities, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim, did in fact co-operate and live peaceably together in the Punjab. Their religious feud slumbered so soundly that, in the face of the obvious kinship of the whole population, one rather looked on it as perhaps moribund. Aitchison was of course an extreme example, but at least it was an exhibition of what was possible: the boys found it rather absurd that they should be separated in religion, and took their real tolerance into later manhood with them.

The British were, after all, a remarkably useful institution in the Punjab. They supplied stiffening, like a tree among tropical vines: one Britisher stiffened up about two hundred Indian colleagues, by reason of the comparatively stiff standards inside him. In this latter day of grace, the British were seldom corrupt: when they worked, they worked hard and their work held water: and they generally put their hearts into their work and took pride in it for its own sake, whether it was High Court work, police, railways, canals, medicine, schools, citrus or cattle farming. You could get on steadily under the British. And they did not take sides in religion. They were that useful thing, a Neutral Observer.

The Punjab was playing its usual tiresome but harmless and rather good-natured political game—rather like grown

PUNJAB COMMUNALISM

men playing at soldiers with rifles they know aren't loaded—when, in March, 1947, the British Government dropped its bomb.

Five months to go !

Instantly every man grabbed at live cartridges and loaded his gun. It was no longer a game. Slumber fled, and the feud leaped out.

The Punjab was going to blow up : it was only a matter of time : the Punjab, "the model Province", "the key", "the barometer of India". Once that occurred, unparalleled horrors might be expected to occur elsewhere.

Other people will write the political history of those early hot-weather weeks. For what it is worth, I will sketch life as we lived it then.

Immediately a new temper flashed over the Punjab. Every Muslim felt it was his Province, by right of his preponderating majority. It was clear that the Punjab Coalition Government, for all Sir Khizr Hayat Khan's wise and statesmanlike endeavours to keep it in being, was doomed to break up. Its disintegration actually took about four months. The General Elections of 1946 had been held upon the issue of the forthcoming hand-over of power. The Muslim League had swept the polls : whereas in the last Legislative Assembly it had held two seats only, it was now returning with an overwhelming majority. This was going to be a straight communal fight. The Muslim Unionist Party held only a handful of seats. Through the support of Sir Bertrand Glancy, who was severely criticized for his action by some, both British and Indian, Sir Khizr had been, nevertheless, enabled to form a new Unionist Government, with, for the first time, Congress participation. The Sikh Khalsa Nationalists were replaced by Akalis, the Congress element which was now in the ascendant. Ranged against the Unionists, in a solid bloc, were now the ranks of League Members. Sir Khizr knew that in the absence of a League-Akali Government, which neither Mr. Jinnah nor Congress High Command would allow to occur, chaos and bloodshed would be the only alternative to his Government. Sir Bertrand Glancy, the Governor who had taken the Punjab through the War, also knew this—in

THE BALLOON GOES UP

fact everyone did, both British and Indian : the only division was between those who wanted the blood-bath and those who didn't—and he therefore maintained Sir Khizr in power. There was increasing protest : the Leaguers represented Sir Khizr as a Congress quisling. Early in April, 1946, Sir Bertrand Glancy retired and Sir Evan Jenkins became Governor. Westminster alone refused to see what lay ahead.

With the tempo of independence quickening elsewhere, it was intolerable to the League that the Muslims constituting the largest single party in the Assembly, and the largest community in the Province, should not have control of affairs. No one would form a coalition with them. Frustration made them dangerous. Constitutional methods were no good ; they therefore copied Congress tactics and tried civil disobedience in an attempt to frighten the Government out of office and to compel the British Governor. The mood became uglier as the weeks wore on and incidents piled up ; but so long as the Unionist Government remained in power, other communities were not unduly disturbed. As soon, however, as it appeared that the Government's nerve was failing and the British grip relaxing, the Hindus and especially the Sikhs began to look to their private armies, forced underground by police action.

Finally, on 2nd March, 1947, Sir Khizr resigned, the Government fell, and the balloon went up.

Such were the political events : all I can add is an account of our experiences at street level.

The Muslim League demonstrations of civil disobedience were the most good-natured mass demonstrations you ever saw, quite unlike anything ever staged by the Hindus who, with their peaceful non-co-operation and suchlike manœuvres, generally start something vicious and beastly that ends in fire and murder. The Muslims took a pride in the genuine and extraordinary cheeriness of their bonhomous meetings and marchings to and from the Governor's house. For some weeks that was all that happened, and no one took it very seriously, though it was a nuisance to traffic. But there was no doubt that things were warming up. Only sheet lighting, however—so far.

MUSLIM DEMONSTRATIONS

The first little flash of fork lightning presaging the holocaust came, as you might expect, from the clouds of students whom no one can control in India (they live largely in squalid lodgings, and where they live in hostels, the Deans make no attempt to be responsible for the inmates). It also came, as you might expect, from the Hindu side. The Muslims swaggered about looking provocatively stalwart, with bigger turbans and trousers than ever : and every Sikh who could lay hands on a family *talwar*—a huge curved sword—lugged it around with him (claiming it to be a religious emblem and not a lethal weapon, those being forbidden)—and a Sikh bicycling with a sword as long as his bicycle is a memorable sight. But, apart from these flauntings, the Muslims and Sikhs, being both fighting peoples, were still being careful not to fool with what they knew was a terrifying reality. The professedly peaceful Hindu, with childish insouciance, played with fire. The students of one particular Hindu hostel, near Zamzammah, Kim's Gun on the Mall, gathered in strength on their balconies and windows and proceeded to hurl abuse at a passing crowd of jocular Muslim demonstrators.

The demonstrators suddenly ceased to be jolly and returned a fire of missiles. The Hindu students were surprised ; two or three were wounded, one was killed, and all were deeply hurt in their feelings (for Hindus, like many clever people, are always surprised when verbal injury is avenged with blows by persons simpler and stronger than themselves).

The affair became a students' riot, and was serious : and from then on was no longer a joke.

I shall never forget, though, some of the incidents, which I heard of through police acquaintances. They were Gilbertian.

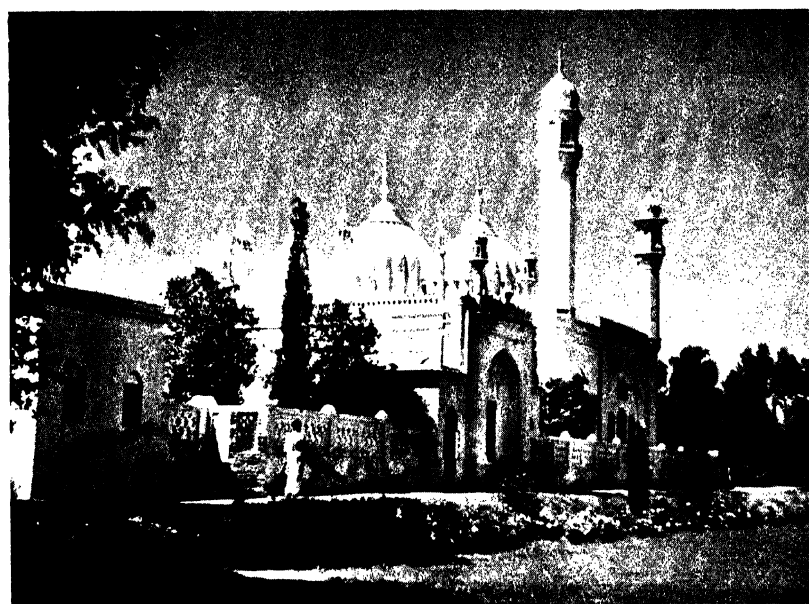
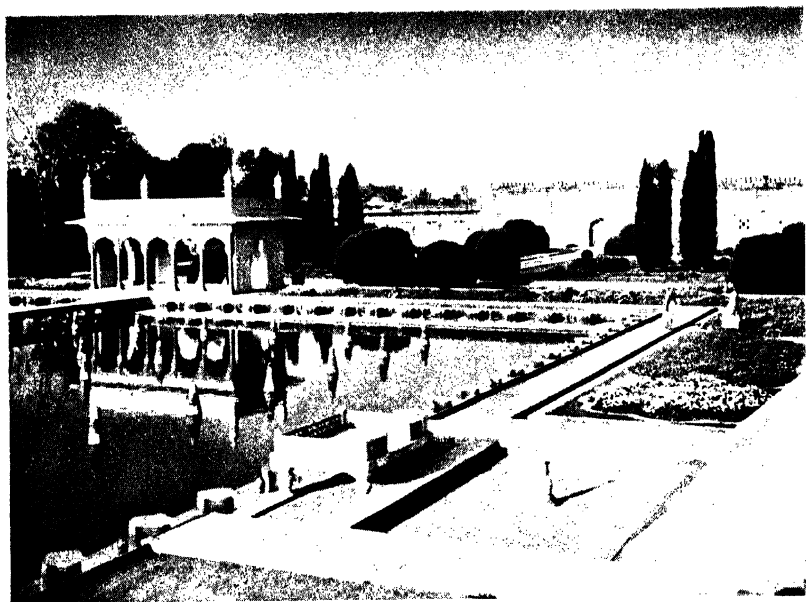
At one time the leaders of the Muslim League, not to be outdone by Congress prowess elsewhere, were all courting arrest, and after they had successfully committed various flagrant acts, the police at one time had six leaders locked up. The police-house was not arranged to house many, and they had to turn the Sergeants' mess-room into a place of detention, and there the Muslim leaders, both ladies and gentlemen (such as the Begum Shah Nawaz, and Mian Iftikhar Ud-din, and Shaukat Hayat, son of the late Premier), had to languish, and eat and also sleep communally. As a picnic it was very

THE BALLOON GOES UP

successful and much enjoyed by all the prisoners, who decided to throw a tea-party in the Superintendent's honour—the fancy cakes being sent for from Lorang's well-known Restaurant and the hostess being the Begum. The British officers much enjoyed the party (who wouldn't, with those people !) but it was difficult to get away and they became more in arrears with their work than ever.

This sort of thing, agreeable as it was, could not go on, if only because jail accommodation was so limited. A policy of scatteration was embarked upon. Lady prisoners were not scattered far : it was often quite enough to dump the female political criminal, with her prison week-end suitcase, along with a friend or servant, in the middle of Lawrence Gardens at midnight—it was then only a step to walk home, whereas no Indian or European woman would care to go afoot at night into the distant Old City, even to be gloriously re-arrested. Male offenders were taken and dumped on a road twelve or twenty miles out : but this was found ineffective as they flagged lifts and were back in no time. So next they were driven out to remote police posts in the country and decanted into them, the name of the place being withheld from them and their exit and destination being kept from followers. Then occurred many scenes when the prisoners (knowing quite well they would not be shot or knocked unconscious) sat tight and refused to budge, with the result that in about three minutes a crowd sprang out of the ground, a meeting started, and they had at once to be driven elsewhere. The trouble arose because these stations are so small that vans cannot drive into the court and the attempted decanting has to occur in the open road. Various ingenious tricks were played to get the prisoners out of the van and into the station : it was a battle of wits.

One very illustrious prisoner already mentioned, Mian Iftikhar Ud-din, was defeated in this game and successfully decoyed into a distant police-station in the wilds whence, when he found he was definitely incarcerated, he indited a letter to the acting officer (a good friend and neighbour of his in ordinary life), begging him to go to his house and secure and send him his wireless, two clean shirts and some odds and ends, and praying him to put a guard on his house and



THE SHALIMAR GARDENS, LAHORE, BUILT BY THE MOGUL EMPERORS TO GIVE THEM
PLEASURE IN THEIR YEARLY COURT MIGRATION TO KASHMIR

PART OF PAKISTAN'S NEW UNIVERSITY, ISLAMIA COLLEGE, PESHAWAR :
THE MOSQUE

EMERGENCE OF PAKISTAN

look after his wife and children, and ending up, "For you are the only man I can trust"—which, as the policeman was ostensibly his chief persecutor, speaks for itself! This politician was formerly a member of Congress, but reverted to the League in loyalty to his community. In prison he was vivacious and witty, and had a very charming and polished wife. I had his little son in one of my plays at Aitchison—one of the most lively, intelligent and taking children I ever met.

But, to return. Besides this, was the daily battle of brains, to prevent the ceaseless demonstrations from becoming serious. No sooner did the Intelligence get wind of a demonstration and of the route planned, than the police were deployed to turn the demonstration and deflect it into other channels and land it out in the suburbs, or else keep it circling around its objective, or to arrange for two converging mobs to miss one another. It was like a crazy game of live chess—with the price of unsuccessful play, riot, bloodshed and fire.

It was a point of honour with the Muslim ringleaders to get themselves arrested. If they were not arrested in mid-yell, they acquired no kudos and lost face and the rank and file felt their leaders had lost a round. The Muslims did not yet wish to proceed to violence, but they wished to make a grand show and it was noblest of all to be arrested. Now that it had got going on this course, the League was determined to rival the Congress record of courted arrests.

By now at least they were all clear as to what they wanted, and that was PAKISTAN. Muslims never, never would be slaves to the hated Hindu. And as they had never had a Press and never gone to Universities much—unless to their own at Aligarh—and never in fact advertised themselves greatly to the British intelligentsia, there was a very good chance that the egregious rulers of Britain would in fact subject them to the Hindu majority, under the erroneous impression that Congress represented India at large and should therefore be endorsed with total rule.

(The reasons why the Muslims had not greatly patronized the Universities, nor bothered much with English, nor gone abroad, nor run a fevered Press, were, that they were well satisfied with one another and with their own culture and

THE BALLOON GOES UP

religion—they had set up their own fine university at Aligarh—and were able under the British to rise without hindrance to posts of status and security.)

To return to the Muslim League demonstrators: if the police did not control the still cheerful crowds, the crowds were very likely to do something that would precipitate riot: and if they did not arrest ringleaders, the crowds would get rougher and rougher till honour was satisfied. As both sides, Muslim and British, were keen on honour and neither on bloodshed, things came to a pass where, before a demonstration, a police officer secretly saw ringleaders, talked over the amount of prison accommodation free, and came to a gentleman's agreement about the number he could arrest—the other side agreeing to be content with that number and in return to prevent the pot from overboiling.

This worked very well for some days, and no one smelled a rat, till the occasion of a famous demonstration outside the Secretariat. The ringleaders harangued from their motor van; in due course the police drove up in another van, gave the demonstrators a good innings, and finally made the agreed number of arrests—twelve if I remember rightly—but alas, this did not end the affair, and furious argument arose, and the situation became ugly. A British officer was sent for post-haste and personally appeared. The organizer, a venerable grey-bearded man, was in a great state. Only twelve had been arrested! Quite right, said the officer, as discreetly as possible: we agreed on twelve. I dare say, sir! cried the old man (all this in Urdu), but it's not enough—you can see what a big show we've got on hand—honour requires more—etc. etc. Now, now, father—now, now, brother (from the harassed Britisher to the increasing number of arguers), you know what a hole we're in as regards room, the police-station is not the Taj Mahal Hotel, etc. etc. Finally the old man turned to an adjutant and cried, "Brother, let's have the *list*! Produce the *list*! Look, Mr. Jackson, sir, now look at this—it's a list, it's written, see, sir, more must be arrested, they want it very badly; here are their names added—written on the list—SIXTEEN, see! You must please arrest SIXTEEN, sir!" That occurred. How different from Congress Hindu riots!

AMRITSAR AND RAWALPINDI

And, to the police chiefs, the maddening part of it all was, that it was not the harmless Muslim Leaguers they were after at all. Their real quarry was the camouflaged, secret and dangerous Hindu organization, the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh : and one of their great fears was the possible resurgence of the fanatical Khaksars.

Throughout this extraordinary period, and indeed to the very end, there was one community that no one attacked, that could go unmolested anywhere : and that was us, the British. We seemed to lead charmed lives : our blood was not wanted : no man's hand was against us. The experience of this safety, in all the circumstances, was strange and, in its way, moving.

But the nerve-racking comedy came to its dreadful end.

Down in Amritsar, the Sikh city, east of Lahore, was also at first comedy : a mob that set out to attack and sack the police headquarters was scattered by the myrmidons of police bees, whose hives were overturned and whose wrath was just. But the Sikh temper is not the cheerful placidity of the Punjabi Muslims, and the event was inevitable.

There came a night in Amritsar when, for one reason or another, never ascertained, the Sikhs went mad—as Sikhs do—and looted and burned the quarter of the small Muslim colony. The Muslims defended themselves and were butchered. The city was in an uproar, and Hindu women fled in large numbers to the precincts of the Golden Temple for shelter : where, to the horror of both communities, Sikhs seriously mishandled them. The cotton-mills were fired and burnt out (resulting later in a total dearth of bed-linen, bed-covers, towels, curtains, body-wear and winding sheets) and for a few days the whole city entered on an orgy of bloody madness.

North-west of Lahore came a terrible answer : the Muslim people of Rawalpindi rose, and, disgraceful and dreadful, many soldiers broke barracks and joined them, and as one man they set on all Sikhs and Hindus, butchered them, and burned their homes, shops and undertakings. The greater part of it was done in a night, but it went on, spreading out into the countryside, for some days. One of the Sikh boys in my Sixth Form class, of a very difficult nature, who had been becoming progressively surly, disappeared on French leave

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for over a week, and returned in a mood I hope I never meet again in a young man, venomous and dangerous : he had gone up to Pindi, and seen his family safe in hiding, but the furious mob had wrecked the contract his father had been working on—a new hospital, very modern, and waiting only for the beds : it was not merely the money they minded about, but the pride of the job, smashed. After that the Sixth Form were never the same : the Sikh boys were nursing a grievance, the Muslims uneasy and remorseful but also sticking to their side, and the Hindus torn between friends, apprehensive and unhappy. From that time on, these feelings seeped through the school. Had we had an English Principal there, the boys might have been given a lead and the degeneration of feeling prevented.

Next we heard that the hillmen around the hill-station of Murree, above Pindi, had taken advantage of the paralysis at Pindi to loot all the summer-houses of rich Sikhs, and later on others as well, and burn down many.

Then the Punjab really broke loose, and in Lahore the real thing at last began. Murders got beyond a point where they could be dealt with. Tonga-drivers, mostly Muslims, refused to carry Sikhs, who knifed them in lonely places. First the suburb of Mozangh, a Muslim quarter, was burned down. Shops closed, the Mall was closed, curfews were imposed by day as well as night. Hindus began to get away before the storm : so did the lowlier Sikhs, the city artisans and craftsmen. My venerable Sikh sewing-man brought me back two blouses, perfectly made and lacking only the buttons, and would not even stop for payment : "*Bara bara taklif, Memsahib,*" he said, "great great trouble, I go to my family beyond Amritsar." So he did, in the moment, and I never saw the old boy again. That is real Punjab character, to bring back your work entrusted, and not wait for money. I sent my bearer down to the bazaar and he (a Muslim) found and paid it to a nephew of the old man's.

Then, even out at Aitchison, two miles from the city, we began to hear the mobs. Muslim mobs yell, "*Nara-e-Takh Bir—Allah Ho Akbar !*" Sikh mobs make a rhythmic war-shout, "*Jo So Nihal ! Sat Siri Akal !*" which, with its ebb and flow according to distance, is frightful, and keeps

SCUTTLE OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE

you well in mind that a mile or so away is a crowd of some thousands, out of its senses with religious rage, and consisting of the largest and fiercest murdering men on earth. I was interested to notice that after desultory barking the dogs behaved as at home when the anti-aircraft artillery or bombs began, and crawled off to cower under furniture.

However it did not stop at surging and yelling mobs—which the military could prevent getting beyond a certain point: and in any case, as the Resident, Sir Herbert Thompson, observed, we ourselves were in general terms safe enough as a mile is a long way to a mob, and mobs are not given to heading for the open country: as against which it was quite unsafe to go outside the School compound alone, or at night, and the Bahawalpur boys, who were given to night-prowling, had the pleasure of chasing an evil-doer with a *kukri* through the bushes at the bottom of my garden, and reproached me for my rashness in continuing to sleep out on the lawn.

In any case, the remaining Europeans were divided up into panels, each with a leader, and plans were issued for us all to repair to the Governor's House and barricade ourselves in if necessary. By this time we were becoming few, so rapidly had the Services been thinned out and disbanded. Everywhere we dwindled like snow: in the ports you could hardly get a bed, and the ships sailed with ten and fifteen in cabins for four, and men slept in huge dormitories down in the ship's ribs. A policy of scuttle as quick as possible. Up-country, it was one of the most frightening things I have ever seen, the constant vanishing of the British. You found friends packing in the heat one day: a week later you called again and the house was empty and dead.

There was soon nothing left, but a thin screen of a few highly-placed officers: in March, 1947, the total strength of the British in the Indian Civil Service was down to four hundred, with three hundred and fifty police officers. (That is to say, one neutral administrator, and less than one neutral police officer, to one million inhabitants.) All the rank and file were withdrawn, all the wives and children gone before: behind the screen was nothing at all.

And it grew hotter and hotter. A hundred and ten degrees, a hundred and twelve, a hundred and fifteen. . . .

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Then finally the city blew up, like a volcano. Nobody knows just how it all went inside that labyrinth of twisting overhanging streets. It was uncontrollable and it had to be left to explode its head off: it was an inferno. There was a stampede of Hindus and Sikhs, streaming out in all directions before the explosion began: they were murdered at large in the countryside: the numbers that perished were never known. The struggle and holocaust went on for about nine days, inside the walls. After that the fires began to burn out, and it became clear that the city was partly gutted.

After this, the curfews continued, but a sort of silence and stillness descended upon Lahore. It arose partly, no doubt, from a moral atmosphere: a dreadful thing had been done, and nobody ever seemed to smile. It arose also from the blank look of all the shops and banks: for nearly every business was Hindu- or Sikh-owned, and trade was at a standstill. It arose also, and even more, from the fact that the jostling streets were empty of all save a few Muslims: for though they outnumbered the others, it was the Hindus and Sikhs who were responsible for all the ceaseless busy coming and going, and all the talk and chatter and argument. And with them departed the girls and women: for the Muslim women were largely still in purdah.

The Mall was deserted, by day and by night: you could walk from side to side of Lawrence Gardens and meet no one: never a family party picnicking in a patch of shade, never a student reading in the low boughs of a shady tree. If you went down to Zamzammah (which was as near as you were allowed to the city) there was a depopulated dusty silence, not a student stirring, and the gardens going dry for lack of watermen. The restaurants and places of resort were either closed, or like tombs. The railway service was dislocated, and food ran out, and the poor began to starve.

And the heat was very great, and the vultures did well on the dead.

And it was far from safe, even now. The following instance will do as well as another to illustrate daily life.

Holidays began, and the Cathedral Church School having

STREET INCIDENT

lost various of its staff, my Indian friend Patience Anand went to help there. At the end of school one day, she offered to run one of the teachers, a Muslim girl, home in her little open car. This took them out to a suburb in the Mozangh area, and Patience delivered her friend and turned to get off home without delay, for it was a Muslim quarter.

She had gone no distance when the car punctured. The street looked safe : she got out to look at the wheel.

Immediately three Muslims, one old, appeared from nowhere. To their way of thinking, an unveiled Indian woman could only be a Hindu woman. In Urdu, Patience asked for help, not knowing what might be in their minds : but she knew that it was touch and go.

Instead of replying, they began to talk with one another in Punjabi. Patience understands Punjabi pretty well, and talks it a little. The men were discussing whether they would kill her, rape her, or forcibly convert her, and get someone to marry her, and what they would do with the car (which was rather a large and indestructible piece of evidence in the picture of what they contemplated). Patience listened to this talk in a state of considerable fright, and tried to break in here and there and joke them out of the proposed courses. They were, however, excited and arguing hard and paid no attention. Then it occurred to her that they were taking her for a Hindu woman.

She then launched an appeal to the old man, declaring that as she was a Christian, they had no business to be regarding her as a Hindu : were not Christians and Muslims followers of the One God ? She succeeded in getting him to attend to what she was saying, whereupon he made representations to the others. Still the thing hung in the balance, for she was an attractive woman and there was no law then. In the end, however, their sense of decency and religion won, and they decided to help her change her wheel instead of violating her. Then they fell to upon it, and they all became very cheerful and joked together. Finally the car was fixed up, Patience gave them five rupees, hoping it was enough to please them and not so much as to rouse them to thoughts of robbery or ransom, and made off while the going was good.

I remember only one hopeful incident in that dreadful,

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time. Some parents withdrew their boys from Aitchison, but the bulk remained. They became uneasy, but the many friendships stood firm. It was well summed up by one of my H.S.C. Muslim boys, when we were discussing the future. He was stubbing holes in his desk and said very grimly, "If I have to fight for Pakistan, I will, Miss Prior, I will . . . all the same" (he looked up and caught Pritam Singh's eye on him) "if I met old Pritam, I'd hate to murder him."

"Yes, Miss Prior, that goes for me too," agreed Pritam. "I wouldn't want to murder anyone from Aitchison."

The Punjab, having spent its energies on disturbances in the early hot weather, lay in a disorganized stillness all the mid-summer months. In the General Post Office the letters lay unsorted, knee deep on the floor. In Government offices was a chaos of neglected business. Pay and provident funds could not be issued or drawn. In the fields stood acres of crops that no one harvested. In the towns and villages were black still ruins. The weather grew hotter and hotter, and the heat shivered over the Province till the rains came to Delhi. The Province lay torpid and disorganized, all through the far more horrible massacre and holocaust that broke out all over Hindustan immediately after the transfer of power upon 15th August, 1947. Then it was overwhelmed by floods of refugees.

Strange tales are told of the hasty doings at high levels in New Delhi. A village debating club would be wound up with more sense of responsibility. A great rule was liquidated without dignity, without a plan, at the orders of a British Government that seems to have cared neither for repute nor for efficiency. General Wavell, not willing to direct what could only be a shambles, laid down the Viceroyalty. Thereafter major decisions were made without the customary conferences, and orders were casually issued to officers who could only consider them repugnant and impracticable. High offices were dealt out like a hand of cards. No one will ever write the real history of those days, because there are no proper records. The nature of the dealings is well seen in the letters from Lord Mountbatten to Hyderabad (a treaty State as big as France) published in Sir Arthur Lothian's book, *Kingdom of Yesterday*.

DISASTER ABOUNDING

Other tales are heard, the first gruesome beginnings of the great double, counterwise exodus of peoples. A certain official went north for Pindi on a train, but it was stopped on an uninhabited part of the line, set upon, and sacked, all Hindu and Sikh passengers being taken out and murdered by the side of the track : when the armed band had cleared off, the official then went up to the engine, with a soldier and a couple of guns or rifles, and in the cab they drove up to the next junction : and there being no hope of going on, he himself had to drive the train back again to Lahore, taking on board an English family who had managed to get down as far as the junction from Kashmir and had lost everything except what they stood up in.

We heard reports of the short-lived riots in Simla, and the firing of the bazaar, and the difficulties of those isolated up there. I heard how in Delhi some Muslim friends of friends, who had kept close in their house and pretended to be gone, living on what they could in a state of siege, were somehow informed that their secret was betrayed, and a band of Sikhs were planning to break into the house that night : upon which, at dusk, they got out and were received into a neighbouring house belonging to Hindus (not, if I recollect rightly, particular personal friends). The Sikhs arrived soon after in a bunch and proceeded to break into the house and rushed in to butcher the Muslims, and on finding them flown, stormed up and down the street : but nobody gave them away, and their hosts themselves lied so stoutly as to save them, and finally when the big migrations began, they got away safely and reached Lahore.

Down in Bombay, we hit yet another aspect of this disastrous business. Again I called on my dear Parsi aunts-by-adoption, and the younger members of the family, and met their friends. But how different it was this time. Eighteen months ago the tone of the community was as it usually is—serene, cheerful, gay and pretty prosperous : rather bitter of course about the discrimination exercised against them by the Hindu municipal authorities—but they still had their European friends and their trade. But now ! it was all confusion and despair. To stay in a Hindu-run Hindustan they could not endure. They would like to go to Australia or New Zealand—but there are

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regulations against Indian immigration, which these non-Indian people patiently accepted : those doors shut, where in the world could they go ? Some were returning to Persia : many were thinking of the Punjab, where they would be made welcome. Karachi attracted them. And indeed I hope they go to Karachi, and by their amazing industry and decency make that small port great for the Muslims—even as they and we together once raised up Bombay from uninhabited mud. They would provide a trade-leadership that Pakistan much needs. How sad was the sudden unhappy doubt and confusion of these excellent and valuable people : but it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and if they will go back to their earlier asylum in North-western India, they will in a little while prosper and increase as greatly as before, and whatever land gives them hospitality will never repent the day or the deed—so I for one hope it will be Pakistan and the Punjab.

But on board ship, there was nothing but the comic and benevolent to mark the occasion. The Indians got up a general children's party, and celebrated the event : but I think their day was clouded by the menu. Whoever arranged the menu for the day had done so in facetious vein, heading the card " Best wishes to the New India ! " or some such thing, and had then gone on, further down, into (I remember only approximately) such items as " Thick Soup Nehru ", " Clear Soup Jinnah ", " Roast Beef à la Mountbatten " (very tactful !), and after other witticisms in similar taste concluded " Ice Cream Bande Mata Ram " (the Hindu song of resurgence). It was a special menu, and we all found this fairly funny : not so our Indian confrères, who sent a solemn deputation to protest to the Captain that their dignity was injured : with the result that the menu was withdrawn, and a completely bowdlerized version reprinted for the dinner tables.

In Northern and North-western India, the vast and foul tragedy continued to play itself out.

An English friend of mine sitting on a bench on Lahore station, waiting for a train, with two Indians beside him, saw a couple of Muslims coming up the platform. They apparently spotted the two Indians for Hindus, seized them, and butchered them out of hand and without preamble then and

INDESCRIBABLE HORRORS

there on the station platform and left them lying. English ladies compelled to travel at this time in Hindustan, but luckily having an air-conditioned coach (these alone are safe, as you lock yourself in at one end and no one can get on till you get out at the other and the windows are special ones), were on a train that was stopped by Sikhs. All Muslims were hauled off it and murdered on the track, men and women alike: the babies in the next compartments, in traditional style, were brained against the wheels of the coach.

Down in Karachi was a young English officer's wife who was meeting every train from the north, and had done for a fortnight. She and her husband had come down to embark and were about to sail: at the last moment he was recalled to Lahore, and ordered to take a contingent of Punjabi Mussulmans of what had been his regiment, to Rawalpindi, *via Delhi*—as it might be, to go from York to Edinburgh, *via London*. Neither he nor his men were ever heard of again: but the young wife was still meeting every train, in case. . . .

In one of the Sikh States, on the eve of the 15th August, horror films were shown everywhere, depicting Muslim atrocities. The Sikh populace was systematically worked up to a pogrom and during the night the Muslim inhabitants were wiped out, as a preliminary step to setting up a Sikh kingdom. From an eye-witness we know that in the Muslim-inhabited quarters of the capital, it was impossible even to walk down the streets when the sun came up, because they were so choked with corpses that you could not find ground to set your foot. Another eye-witness, a well-born Sikh, sitting on a bridge on the Ferozepore Road over a Sutlej canal, saw bodies floating down on the full canal-flood—Muslim bodies, in this area—and counted the number passing under the bridge in ten minutes: they totalled 237. And this was going on all day.

In the opposite direction wandered the remaining Sikhs and Hindus from country areas, equally hunted down, equally dodging murder at the hands of Muslims. Some were holiday people caught by circumstances—as for instance a very kind, honest and gentle-bred young Brahman of our staff who had gone up to Srinagar with his family for their annual holiday: they had to flee for their lives (Kashmir being a Muslim land) out of Kashmir, all through Jammu, past Sialkot, through the

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Muslim plains : he and his wife and two fat baby boys had to do the whole trip—as good as to cross France—on foot, and in momentary terror. They arrived safely, but looked like ghosts.

It is reckoned that three millions, of both sides, perished : and how many moved will never be known.

Then, as that colossal fury subsided, came the floods of refugees, Muslims driven and fleeing out of the United Provinces and the Central Provinces, drifting westward, travelling in packs for safety, often butchered in packs, all in unorganized and unprotected hordes plodding towards the Punjab, starved, diseased, the brutally maimed with limbs lopped off, falling to lie all along the roadsides, like the wreck thrown up on a beach by a storm. There was next to no organization of direction or reception : the disaster was too vast to control. If you came to a deserted farm, you were lucky, and settled in, and maybe found some food around, on the hoof or on the stalk. If not, and if you did not hit one of the haphazard camps or kitchens, and no one could help and your strength gave out, you lay down and died by the road : and the stench of the Province was great.

But the charitable were active : those with any power devised all the relief they could : the women who had been Queen Mary College girls gave a great lead, wherever they were, and distinguished themselves by their merciful work.

According to official figures, Pakistan has had to absorb and re-settle seven million refugees.

In Europe too we have had these mass movements, but not on so terrible a scale. Over here, they were the result of the warring cupidities of Hitler and his Nazis, and Mussolini and his Fascists, and the advancing Communist Empire, and lesser but similar captains of death.

But to us British, with all our benevolent pretensions, and to our Socialist leaders in particular, are reserved the glory and honour of having launched the largest-scale human disaster of modern times through the purest irresponsible folly and sheer addled idealism.

CHAPTER 14

THE PUNJAB IN PAKISTAN TO-DAY

THIS book has been largely about the Punjab—the Punjab scene, the Punjab people : and the reader may well ask, “ Is it worth while saying so much about the Punjab ? After all, it is merely a province of Pakistan.” That is true. But it is also true that West Pakistan—Pakistan itself—stands or falls by the Punjab. The other provinces all back on to this province : it contains the wealth and the fighting men of the new country. Without West Pakistan, there can be no Pakistan at all : not all the jute of East Pakistan can save it. If the “ model Province ” was formerly “ the barometer of India ”, as no less an authority than General Sir Francis Tuker puts it, how much more is it the core, the kernel, the heart of Pakistan.

North and west lie the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. South lies Sind. The two first provinces are tribal territories, and the tribes that justify their being so described are chiefly Pathan tribes. These tribes all have kindred over the border in Afghanistan. They are more settled in character than their trans-border relations. Among the trans-border tribes, it used to be the regular thing to descend on India in the cool season, trade and loot, and return to the hills. A substantial portion of Pakistan revenue is allotted to the trans-border tribes to buy them off. All the same, both these tribes and their settled kinsmen in Pakistan are being stirred up by Afghanistan to claim the secession of the N.W.F.P. and other tribal areas from Pakistan into “ Pakhtunistan ” (or “ Pathanistan ”)—and behind this cry and this political activity is the hand of Hindustan, which is alleged to be paying the Afghans to pursue this policy. I expect someone else is also paying the Afghans to pursue this policy : namely Russia. Hindustan wants quite nakedly to break up Pakistan : Russia has her eye on Communizing India, and would naturally back and foster any political disorder—has indeed been intriguing for several generations in Afghanistan.

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Upon these promptings, Afghanistan claims the tribal areas, and Pakistan says that the view of the Afghan ruling family does not represent the will of the Afghan people, which is no doubt true. I should think Afghanistan, or its rulers, is doing well on—probably—three unearned incomes. It must pay well to be in a position to blackmail all your neighbours. And what of Sind? Sind was always separatist. Sindhis are of a strongly marked character, very different from the tribesmen of the Punjabis: astute, tricky, averse from labour and given to commerce. Nearly all the real work in Sind is done by imported Punjabis.

It is the solid, stolid, agricultural Punjab that, in fact, holds together the poles of the tribesmen and the Sindhis. There these people sit upon the famous Five Rivers, full of industry and common sense, raising crops and prosperity and solid orthodox religion. Without the Punjab, there would cease to be any West Pakistan. And if there were no West Pakistan, there would be no East Pakistan. According to experts, Hindustan could liquidate East Pakistan in eight days. It is West Pakistan that Hindu policy aims to disrupt: West Pakistan is the obstacle to a Hindu-ruled India.

Without the Punjab, there would not be any Pakistan at all.

Pakistan, East and West, labours under some severe handicaps. Of the East I will only say that it has a big trade in tea, and a virtual monopoly of raw jute; no mills, no defences: Hindustan could overrun East Pakistan as easily, or nearly as easily, as she overran Hyderabad.

The disadvantages of West Pakistan are all acute in the Punjab. From Karachi north, the railways run for hundreds of miles along the frontier. (Trains, by the way, are running with excellent punctuality, and rail travel, apart from some danger of theft, and occasional robbery, is very fairly safe; and so is road transport in non-tribal areas.) The roads take of necessity the same way and are as vulnerable. For fuel Pakistan depends largely on foreign sources: coal from Poland and South Africa, for example, though there is some oil at Attock and much of the locomotive establishment is oil-fired. Then, as regards electricity, this is largely derived and relayed from the Joginder Nagar Hydro-Electric Works from Mundi

REFUGEES POUR INTO PAKISTAN

in Hindu territory : Hindustan could black out the Punjab. Finally, several canal headworks lie in Hindu territory, which means that water could be turned into the old river-beds so that large areas in the upper regions could be put out of agricultural activity and wealth and prosperity materially diminished in a single season. Hindustan has made it clear before now that she knows she holds these trumps, and that is why Pakistan is pushing ahead energetically with the vast Indus schemes, and why she is crying out for European engineers, and for control of the Jhelum which runs out of Kashmir—Kashmir which is a Muslim land anyhow. In respect of electricity and water, the Punjab is under the shadow of the mailed fist of Hindustan : Punjab disaster would be Pakistan disaster.

Incidentally, the whole canal organization is working with entire efficiency.

Another great handicap—let us hope only a temporary disadvantage—is the terrible refugee problem faced by West Pakistan. Figures are now available, and it is estimated that this new land has had to absorb or settle 7,800,000 Muslims from other parts of India, often very foreign in speech, person and custom. The bulk of these have had to be settled between the Punjab and N.W.F.P., and it has been a grievous business as the attitude of the local to the new settler has not always been welcoming—since the local, on throwing out his Sikhs or Hindus, had taken over their farmland, and now had to yield up to families often more foreign to him than the ejected, who had been men of another religion but of his own breed. The refugees themselves do not always settle or work too well, suffering as they do from starvation and shock. This whole business has been an immeasurable disaster for both sides, and the end is yet far. The problem has borne chiefly upon the Punjab, as far as the farming or artisan class is concerned : but it also comes out in the upper classes, for many of the cultured families from the Central and the United Provinces considered themselves the élite of Islam—Agra, Lucknow, Allahabad, Aligarh are now all in Hindustan—and they are as much as the toilers concerned to establish themselves as before, whence it arises that so many Pakistan diplomats and politicians are from far outside Pakistan, and not only the high-ranking

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men, but provincial administrators. In the Punjab the Punjabis are not the leading element in their own provincial administration. (Which shows very clearly to what an extent the Punjabi thinks with his hands—and heart—but not his head !)

Another trouble ahead of Pakistan is the Urdu question. Urdu is now used in all administration, including the provincial, and in all schools and up to B.A. English is like French with us, the first foreign language. In East Bengal there is absolute resistance to this Urduizing. Here Hindustan has even greater difficulties than Pakistan, and is likely to emerge with a very great advantage over her : for the speeches of Hindustan are so absolutely unrelated, that it has proved impossible to impose one speech, and it has been decreed that English shall remain the lingua franca and substantially retain its place in education, for twenty years to come. 'This means that India will remain in touch by speech with the Anglo-Saxon races : but Pakistan, with a better chance to impose the polite and beautiful speech of Urdu, will in fact be cutting herself off. With the language unfortunately goes a great servant in the cause of national illiteracy and reluctance, and of difficulty in foreign dealings—the beautiful but perfectly baffling script. All this will prevent the advance of Pakistan. Just as the Muslims could not be bothered to acquire English education and so were behind in careers and publicity and politics all along, and found their case unrepresented and not understood and were done down when finally it came to the British exodus from India—so now they are too proud and cannot be bothered to keep up their English, and they will get their reward : they will lag behind in world advance. In diplomacy and science and living they will fall back. They may console themselves with mutual admiration : it will hardly make up for being out of the picture.

A further great problem for Pakistan is Defence. She has two land frontiers of great length and exceptional vulnerability. On the west the Afghan wolf sits and grins above the hills : on the east, the Sikh tiger sits and watches from the long grass. The North-western frontier was never a quiet frontier at any time : it needs men and money to hold the tribesmen back. Pakistan has to budget *rakhwali* to buy off the tribesmen, and it works rather well. Her own Army is keen, proud of itself,

and a force to be reckoned with—this although Hindustan got away with all the best equipment, allotting a poor share and all the worse stuff to go across the new frontier—28 per cent of effects, though Pakistan has the Frontier of India to hold. As for the men who will recruit to the Pakistani Army, here again it will be the P.M.—the Punjabi Mussulman, who was the main prop of the former Indian Army—who will be the main prop of the Pakistani Army, out-balancing the less reliable tribesmen. Significantly, the officers are mostly of Pathan families, whether from the N.W.F.P., or long settled in the Punjab. It is also the Punjab which supplies the bulk of the ratings for the expanding Pakistani Navy: Punjabis are natural sailors. The Sind population is not a soldiering one, and indeed Sind relies herself to a surprising degree on the Punjabi, not only for defence but for agriculture and kindred work—since the Sindhi is too idle for much labour. The Army of Pakistan is universally viewed with the greatest enthusiasm and pride: it is disciplined and efficient, and keen. It has a notable spirit of service, brotherhood, and loyalty: and it is the Punjab element that forms this core of staunch feeling.

A word is perhaps not out of place concerning the Muslim princely States in Pakistan. Their fate is quite other than that of the States in Hindustan, where Mr. Nehru and his henchmen have liquidated or forced the accession of all the States by various power-politic methods. The States acceding to Pakistan continue as before: this is partly a tribute to the fact that they were decently governed, and partly due to a fundamental difference of view. To the Muslim way of thinking, a ruler is not held to be a ruler appointed by semi-divine right of birth (as are Hindu rulers), and at the same time, his office is respected on the ground that he is maintaining order under God.

Though, as I have pointed out, the Punjab is the heart of Pakistan, change has overtaken Lahore. Lahore, once the leading city of North-western India, next to Delhi, lies dangerously near the frontier, and is tending to become only a provincial capital, especially since Karachi became the capital of Pakistan. Its University can no longer be what it was in the days when Sikhs and Hindus flocked to it: another University

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has been set up at a safer distance in the N.W.F.P. Lahore is therefore relapsing into being a provincial capital.

It is, however, a pleasant place as ever to live in. The erstwhile Lawrence Gardens—now the Bagh-i-Jinnah—and the Rose Gardens (now Gulistan-i-Fatima) flourish as ever, and the Mall is full of flowers. Though it has no European officials, European business-men are more numerous than before. Lahore people are as pleasant as ever : but a change has come. The Indian social life of the city is immensely the poorer for losing the Hindus and Sikhs. The Sikhs were always in the van of emancipated life, and the Hindus made a great contribution in art, music and dancing. These have fallen under a cloud. No orthodox Muslim girl learns to dance and sing in the Indian style any more. Life is by so much the more drab and dull and frustrated. Moreover, the removal of the other communities, on both sides of the frontier, has led to a general slackening off in social behaviour. Here in Lahore, communal competition used to work so as to make each show himself at his best. Islam needs something to stir her up, or she relapses into a sort of stagnation. Lahore, in falling out of the front place, and being the focal point of the most solid Muslim country, is trying to be rather ultra-Muslim in character, and pressure is brought to bear on the modernists. People are afraid to be seen smoking or eating or drinking during Ramazan, even on the station, which implies the licence of a journey: women do not dare to be seen un-*burqa*'ed: everybody observes the times of prayer punctiliously—boys will even spring out of a swimming-bath and say their evening prayer as they may happen to be. Persons breaking these appearances of piety might be roughly handled. Even European women are looked upon with disapproval. The modernist element has, for the time being at any rate, given up the effort to be modern : at least, with so many people taking so much care to appear orthodox, they are careful to keep their modernism out of sight. For example, they waltz and foxtrot heartily in the Club, more than ever before : but, in consequence of some hooliganism when things were thrown at dancing ladies, they now erect screens and make use of the hedges when the weather is hot, and there is a kind of purdah free-for-all inside. This is very silly and even bad, and it

FOLLY OF THE BURQA

must be admitted that the modernists have blotted their record by a good deal of divorcing. Many modernists subscribe to customs in which they do not believe in order to avoid one kind of conspicuousness and to gain another. The cause of emancipation would be better served by a more sincere orthodoxy, a more courageous coming-out, and a steadier self-discipline. Otherwise the modernists are giving the game away to the reactionaries, and the social progress of Pakistan with it.

In the matter of women, the Punjab is pulling two ways. While *burqas*, which before Partition were seldom seen, have reappeared everywhere, plans exist (on paper) for the opening of many more schools for girls. There are also fine plans for hospitals: only there are no nurses. There are plans for women's Services: but no young women. After Partition, the Pakistan Women's National Guard was started, and girls over eighteen joined up with great alacrity, since membership enabled them to dash about without *burqas*, in lorries, with rifles, in order to learn to shoot. They felt very proud and the idea was that they should learn to defend their honour. However it was perceived that this did not really lead anywhere and that Pakistan had only 9 per cent of the nurses she would need in case of war—not to mention the hospitals, which were hopelessly under-staffed. It is much easier to get Christian girls for nurses than Muslim girls. The Punjabi girl, like her brother, is very lazy, but under the conscience-giving stimulus of Christian teaching, she becomes a good nurse: Islamic teaching does not provide this stimulus. But there were nothing like enough Christian girls for the job. Consequently attempts were made to draw the girls into training for nursing, midwifery, teaching etc. The response was disappointing: it is modern fun to dash about in lorries, un-*burqa*'ed, learning to shoot to defend your honour: it is time-honoured fun to get married and have children: it is not fun to learn to look after the sick, to wash other people's dirty babies, and so on.

Pakistan, and especially the Punjab, is here up against the whole question of the Islamic seclusion of women. The N.W.F.P. and tribal areas are in this far behind the Punjab, and it is what happens in the Punjab that will decide the fate of Pakistan. The Koran, contrary to the generally held idea, does not recommend the seclusion of women. It is by no

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means an Islamic tenet : it is just an accident that has come out of the turbulent smash-and-grab past of the Arab and Afghan and Pathan and Mogul peoples.

The seclusion of women is a moral condemnation of the people who practise it. It implies, firstly, that the men cannot trust themselves not to covet other men's women : and secondly, that the women are untrustworthy.

It never seems to strike the men of Islam—what is the case—that the *burqa* in the street is a great aid to immorality. If a bored, secluded woman wants to go to an assignation with a lover, what can she do better than put on a tent-like disguise ? Her own husband cannot spot her in the crowd. This principle was well recognized in Constantinople, which used to do a great trade in houses of assignation. Indeed not only women bent on meeting lovers find the *burqa* useful, but also the murderer and the thief. Not all the *burqas* on the street are covering women !

Again, it never seems to strike Muslim men that if half their race is kept in seclusion and in uneducated ignorance, that is a great hindrance to their advance. Pakistan would at once see the disadvantages ahead, if half her men were to be boxed up and left to grow up fools. It would halve her present hopes. Then why not double her hopes and resources by bringing out the boxed-up, uneducated, out-of-the-world half of her people ? Especially as this half is the half which will make or mar the children ? A trained and open mind in a woman is never thrown away : if she becomes a mother, she is an abler-minded mother, and it is the mothers, not the men, who make a race.

Then again, there is the attitude to women and girls. Girl babies are not valued. Sons are the source of pride, they are welcome : girls are "just another girl". Perhaps girl babies are not very often killed at birth : but in sickness, little effort is made to preserve them, though heaven and earth will be moved for the sick son. In the Punjab, this is frankly amazing, for there are not even enough girls to go round in marriage.

The recent official figures for males and females are startling. It must be clearly grasped that births are about equal. These astounding figures are solely due to carelessness and unwillingness in the preservation of girl children.



A TYPICAL YOUNG PUNJABI WOMAN



A YOUNG PUNJABI NURSE, WEARING A KAMIZ AND SHALWAR, BUT TRANSFERRING THE IMPRACTICABLE SHOULDER-SCARF TO THE WAIST

PAKISTAN NEEDS HER WOMEN

	Total Males	Total Females	Excess Males
Pakistan, all	40,089,000	35,598,000	4,491,000
East Pakistan	22,057,000	20,062,000	1,995,000
West Pakistan	18,032,000	15,536,000	2,496,000
Punjab (with Bahawalpur)	11,029,000	9,605,000	1,424,000

These figures mean that there are $2\frac{1}{2}$ million men in West Pakistan, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ million in all Pakistan, who must rely on prostitution or adultery or polyandry for natural satisfaction, and cannot look forward to home and wife and their own children.

It never seems to strike the Muslim man that, in a modern world, girls are economically *more* valuable than boys. Boys are all very well if all you want is warriors. In a modern state, such as Pakistan wishes to be, what is wanted is girls and more and more girls and women. What is wanted is the work of the pre-marriage girls, the up-to-date twenty-five's—the secretaries, nurses, telephonists, clerks, shoppies, light factory hands—and also the work of the post-forty's, the mothers with child-bearing behind them—the army of welfare-workers, teachers, court-officers, the women who can go out into the streets and villages. Modern countries run on the services rendered by women, and the standard of living in America or Britain or Scandinavia would collapse without the women's effort. A modern country simply cannot carry a population which is 50 per cent idle and uninformed. Not only the work of women is needed, but the political weight of the views of women, which, the world over, make for peace, security, and welfare. Pakistan needs to take a good look at Turkey, which is a regenerated country, and regenerated by reason of the fact that her women gave up idleness for work and full citizenship, and earned the respect of their men, and became women whose respect the men also had to earn. Pakistan has already a huge disadvantage in having a minority of women. She would do well to make full economic use of what she has.

I wonder how many young Muslim men and women have said to me, "It's the old people who hold us back! It's our

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grandfathers and grandmothers ! We must wait till they are dead—*then* you will see these hateful *burgas* cast aside and we shall all come out ! ” But alas, not all the reactionaries are Mullahs, grannies, or older men. It was a young Aitchison Old Boy who said, apropos of prospective Partition, “ Good ! then we’ll be able to clap all the women back into purdah ! ” A young man of my friends has recently had his engagement arranged to a purdah (but educated) girl : he thinks seclusion is a good idea as his tribe is a semi-holy one and expected “ to set an example ”. An example of a half-hamstrung race, I suppose. These young gentlemen all want Pakistan to succeed as a nation : yet they are willing not only to dispense with the useful effort of half their man-power, but to ensure their own non-success and backwardness as a people by keeping half their race in uneducated subjection. Schooling a girl is only initial education : real education is the effect of unsecluded life. Secluded women, at best only partially developed, bored, small-minded, out of the world, and socially irresponsible, *cannot* produce sound-minded men, either as sons or husbands. This is not a feminist’s argument : it is a fact. Pakistan, in general attainment, lags far far behind Hindustan. It is your Muslim boys and girls who are your lazy and ignorant boys and girls : they are the typical product of secluded women. It is the grown Muslim who is outwitted and out-matched every time by a grown Hindu. A genial vanity cannot take the place of wits. If you can count out the women of a people, you can count out that people. The men may be some good at fighting : they will never be any good at policy or diplomacy. They will never even make an all-round showing among civilised people. Women are, if intelligent and responsible, an incomparable asset. But if they are kept to being mere objects of desire, or pet animals, or luggage, they are a terrible liability.

The most noticeable feature about all Pakistanis is their unquestionable faith in, and enthusiasm for, their new country. I am not saying that the first rapture and purity of intent have lasted—the first mood and spirit out of which, had there been clean and generous leadership, a noble land might have been forged. No : in high places there has been an unseemly scramble and wrangle for the plums, corruption and intrigue

have been rife, laziness and inefficiency embarrass all effort. But Pakistan is a going concern : the country is running, the capital is humming, the people are keen to make a success of things. As evidence, there is the Pakistani rupee, standing un-devalued and steady. It is steady because of the jute of Eastern Pakistan and the wheat of the Punjab : and also because of the character of the people. In spite of all the Indian-ness of Pakistan, Pakistan has what it takes to make a people and a country. It has, for its unshakable heart, the people of the Punjab.

Let me quote from a friend's letter. This friend is an Indian Christian, and the whole family are keen Pakistanis : " I like this All Muslim Staff. There is no intrigue ; they are tolerant, and more friendly than the Hindus. . . . I do wish this conflagration in Korea may not affect us (selfish, of course !). Somehow, we feel, we have just a breather as a nation for growing up. We are doing so well here in Pakistan. Food is plentiful and cheap—nice cloth in the market—import seems to be good, things are not expensive. Life seems pleasant—and now we begin to hear the drums of the War-Lord again. . . ." And a few months later : " Lahore has foreigners passing through all the time now. Life is much richer in social contacts than in pre-partition days. . . . Recently we had the Asian Lawn Tennis Championships—so many people were here from countries other than Britain. To-day I read in the papers that at Karachi the Railway Officials met to organise a Touring Bureau, because they get so many enquiries from Foreign Countries about visiting Pakistan, that they need an Agency."

Various Pakistani friends are over here, and it is all the same story. They are mighty pleased and proud of their new country. So are Hindustani friends, but there is a prickle of resentment : " You let Pakistan occur." The Pakistan mind, on the other hand, has a little over-crow : " We weren't really so anxious for Independence, but now we've got it, we'll show you a thing or two." On both sides, under the smiles and pride and chatter, is a dark and gruesome undertow, carefully concealed from sight : it is the memory of the rivers of blood and murder and filthy atrocity of which each side stands guilty before the other. There is a deep and dreadful rift in the old,

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jolly, and genuine "brotherhood" of the Punjab east and west. For this we, the British, stand guilty: for at one time, it was proposed not to divide the Punjab, but to yoke the Sikhs with the Muslims. Had this been done, the massacres and floods of refugees would never have occurred. Pakistan would have been mistress of her own water-heads. The Sikhs would not have been dispossessed of their farms, nor have gone mad and stained their honour with the vilest tale of butchery and atrocities known in India. But we did not listen to rightness: we listened to the Hindus.

CHAPTER 15

WHITHER COMMONWEALTH?

I WOULD like, in conclusion, to pass on to discuss a wider topic. I have taken some length to describe the character of the people of a very large Province, which, I believe, constitutes the heart and strength of the new country of Pakistan. I have described them in their daily commitments, for I believe a people is more truly revealed in their intimate life, than if one were to put down a record of the movements of troops and mobs and politicians: the mobs and the troops and the politicians arise from the lives of the people. I showed these people in their former friendliness, which was not merely an appearance. In spite of all the record of burnings and atrocities, the children with limbs lopped off, the women with child ripped up, the old men butchered, the villagers locked in barns and burned alive—these north-western people are of kindred tribes—of which the greatest is the Jat: blood is thicker than water and it is to be hoped that, in time to come, these people may settle down together again. Not less did the Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Normans, Dutch and English raven upon one another: yet we and our branches are now the only stable democracies in the world. These tribes have done all this to one another before, and yet up to 1947 they were the “brotherhood” of the Punjab. What has been before, will be again.

As I see it, the British did a criminal thing in splitting the Punjab. We did it, because our appallingly ignorant but sentimental and unrealistic intelligentsia were taken in by the charm, appeals and threats of the Hindus, led by Mr. Gandhi and Congress. These Hindus, in spite of all camouflage to the contrary, are reactionaries: they want a Hindu State headed by Brahmans and managed by Bunnias and defended by the militant castes and tribes. They did not wish to see Pakistan established, but to have the Muslims as a minority under themselves. By their intrigues and representations, seconded by the Sikhs who were inflamed to want a Sikhistan,

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they succeeded in inducing the British to split the Punjab. They are now engaged in trying to encircle the Punjab by taking Kashmir, to which they have no right : and by intriguing with Afghanistan to detach the N.W.F.P. from Pakistan. If they manage to retain Kashmir and to prise off the N.W.F.P. from adherence, it will not be so difficult to annex the rest of the Punjab and even Sind. You can always break a bundle of sticks if you can get the sticks apart and break each stick separately. That is Hindustan's policy.

Hindustan and Pakistan are both on the brink of war with one another. Pakistan is frankly a militant State but peaceably inclined : Hindustan makes much play with the "mild Hindu" camouflage, but she is entirely aggressive. Her record in four years is one of a succession of acts of aggression and power-politics : Junagadh, Hyderabad, Kashmir, a series of other States coerced, and more politically undesired persons juggled in prison than ever at any time under the British. When Hindustan wishes to ensure the accession of unwilling States she offers to cut off all supplies. When she wishes to argue with Pakistan, she has a still more powerful weapon, which she used during the spring planting season of 1948 ; in 1948 she cut off completely the flow of water in every canal that crossed the boundary from Hindustan into Pakistan. This record may surprise the intelligentsia—the unpractical political philosophers and political theorists and sentimentalists, the commentators of our "forward" journals, our arm-chair Solons : it may surprise scholars steeped in the Vedas and Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita—works which, even the last, do not at all influence the average Hindu : it cannot surprise anyone who knows the actual character of the Hindu religion, or the Brahman, or the Bunnia.

Both these States are in the British Commonwealth. Pakistan feels at home with us : she is governed by a religion we can understand and admire : she has taken her place as a Dominion without fuss, or repudiation of links. Hindustan declared herself a Republic, has little in common with the Commonwealth aims or ideals, and is dominated by a religion which is repulsive and reprehensible in practice. We may fairly ask ourselves what she is doing in our convoy at all, especially when she has all her guns trained on another ship

in our company which has all the hall-marks of belonging rightfully with us : in fact she has started shooting across the bows of our friend. The flag she flies is plainly a skull and cross-bones. Do we really *want* this kind of ship in our company ?

I think we would do well to look at things as they really are—the private relationships and the public records—and reflect.

It is possible for an Englishman to be on terms of personal friendship with individual Hindus : but under even the closest friendship with the laxest Hindu, is a gulf as deep as instinct : for Hindu thought is based on the practice of differentiation between man and man, higher and lower, superior and inferior. The only Hindus who do not entirely think this way are Punjabi Khattris, and the Rajputs and Jats ; with these one can be friends outright. The further east and south you go, the less does the average Hindu resemble those simpler-minded men and women of the north.

To understand Hindu society, it is necessary to realize that the fortune of your body and your soul depend upon your living absolutely in the grade to which you are born : virtue consists in resignation to it. At the top is the Brahman, acutely intelligent, unchallengeable God-in-man, to whom all is permitted. Theoretically he is there to teach and serve. Actually he is animated by an arrogant pride without top or bottom. I hastened to say that very many Brahmans are humble and charming folk, ashamed of the behaviour of their fellows, determined to reform the caste and go back to their ancient purity of principle. Reform movements have several times been started, and have slowly died out. The Brahman remains, upon the whole and in general, perhaps the most shameful human phenomenon that has ever evolved.

Hindu India hated the British, because the British stood for equalitarianism, for the abolition of brutal spiritual privileges of one man over another : we stood for a society where a sweeper could rise to be an M.P., and where a Brahman might feel free to earn a living by supervising city drainage : for the discountenancing of child-marriage and widow-burning, for the abolishing of the practices that gave victims to the

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ritual strangling-cord and laid the victims under the wheels of Juggernaut's car at Puri and so on and so forth. I think too that most intelligent Hindus are aware that, however little we may seem religious, our soul revolts in nausea from Hindu temples, Hindu idols, Hindu religious practices in general—the blood, the goats, the marigolds, the gabbled readings, the paintings, the stones, the baby brides, the Shakti orgies. In a word, the British way and the Hindu way are incompatible, for the same reasons and on the same grounds as are the Muslim way and the Hindu way. Both British Christian rule and Muslim thinking present a fundamental challenge to Hindu life: the abolition of a religion of privilege and monstrosity.

I do not say there are not many Hindus who do not think and live very like Christians and Muslims, and many who have really broken from the Hindu fold. There are. We meet and know them. But few go back to reform the fold. One gay free sheep cavorting in the sun outside does not represent the thousands penned up by cunning shepherds in the dark beastly cavern behind.

This was the great reason why Hindustan (or at least the shepherds thereof) hated the British and for thirty years tried everything from murder to non-violence, from riots to literary subtleties, to get us gone.

A thing that, I think, is never realized in Britain, or America, is the fact that until Mr. Jinnah emerged, the voice of Muslim India was never heard. It was not heard because it was not raised, for the Muslims were content with a fair deal. Nor was the voice of vast agrarian India ever heard, for they had no spokesmen and were content with prosperity. The voice that was heard was the voice of the disappointed city university Hindu boy, the man who was born too high to labour and was not good enough for a steady clerkship, or who was good enough but could find no place, since there was no restriction on university numbers, but a limit to government posts. Formerly these classes of men learned Persian and sought Mogul appointments. In those days India had not heard of political freedom or democracy. Latterly they flocked to learn English and quoted our own principles at us, in order to get back power into their own I-am-better-than-thou hands. Perhaps one

HINDU DISSATISFACTION

should not blame the ignorant intelligentsia at home for not seeing this simple fact : after all, they don't know India. Some of them do not even realize that the Vedas are no longer read, and that few Indians pay any attention to the beautiful Tagores. Whatever the townee vocal Hindu gives India, it will not be democracy or political freedom.

But after the hand-over of power, on 15th August, 1947, they hated us even more virulently—so much so, that British officials found it impossible to stay at all. Some stayed for a term, to tide over, but had already made up their minds to pull out, some for posts in Pakistan, some for other parts altogether, some with no prospects at all but still preferring to go.

You would think, having received their freedom on a plate, the Hindus would view us, if not with gratitude, still not with hate.

The reason for the hate was quite simple. Because at the last minute we set up Pakistan. And the Hindu lust for power demanded to rule the whole peninsula of the Indian sub-continent. In something the same way, Germany wished to subjugate all Europe : or the Pope and Roman Church claim rule over all Europe. Hindustan represents an amalgamation about equivalent to Germany plus Rome, combined material-spiritual.

It is as well not to be taken in by the political utterances of Hindustan, for its spokesmen are men who have no idea of objective truth but believe absolutely in what they want. When the leaders of Hindustan state that Kashmir is a Hindu country, this is not true. When they state that Pakistan began aggression against Hindustan, this is not true or only technically true, for the tribesmen who began to move sporadically into Kashmir were not Pakistanis. (When they state that Hindustan has forgiven and forgotten and now loves the British, this is probably no more true.)

With the Kashmir question I have already dealt elsewhere. Hindustan, at the moment of writing, occupies the only bit of Kashmir worth having—the Vale. She occupies it by force of arms and maintains her troops by air and by a new road built through the fore-hills of the Himalayas at vast expense, from Pathankot to Jammu City. It is as if she occupied the

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small Lowlands of Scotland, leaving to the natives of the land the wild and inhospitable (and unprofitable) Highlands. All this, of course, chiefly because Mr. Nehru is a Kashmir Brahman. Now she must be watched lest she misrepresent the case, on the principle that the pen is mightier than the sword. I myself must plead guilty to the greatest scepticism regarding the disinterestedness of Hindustan's present international rôle of mediator. Hindustan is openly out to secure the "lead" in the East: she is in the grip of boundlessly ambitious men. Sir Benegal Rau is no doubt moved by personal love of peace: but the land he represents, having made a fair face for itself, will later on say, "Now you see how peace-loving we Hindus are—give us Kashmir!"

Hindustan asserts that Pakistan began the first course of aggression. As I have said, the Pathan tribesmen who first raided into Kashmir were not Pakistanis, but from the further hills. Hindustan herself began aggression, in Junagadh. Junagadh had a Muslim ruler and a 90 per cent Hindu population. The ruler opted for Pakistan. Pakistan unfortunately welcomed the accession: Hindustan claimed the population. Pakistan climbed down as gracefully as possible. But Hindustan, to make sure, not trusting to justice—because her politicians, being Hindus, cannot believe in anything so democratic as justice—marched up her troops and stood some warships off the coast. In the similar case of Hyderabad, she fought a campaign to secure the State. In Kashmir, the ruler was Hindu, the people 90 per cent Muslim, and 60 per cent Muslim in Jammu, and the ruler opted for Hindustan. By analogy, Hindustan should have let the State go to Pakistan. She has not done so: she wants to surround Pakistan if possible, and Mr. Nehru personally wants the Vale for his Brahman brothers. Those acts are not the acts of a just or honest people.

However, like Hitler, Mr. Nehru and the Hindus believe that if you say black is white loudly and long enough, you can fool people into accepting it for truth—and certainly the success the Hindus have had with our intelligentsia would seem to bear them out. But we must be on our guard. To say, as Mr. Nehru recently did,* for the charming of guileless

* *The Times*, 10th November, 1949.

HINDU DISLIKE

British M.P.s, who have all been brought up not to lie, that relations between Britain and Hindustan were happy, and bitterness and ill-feeling almost entirely passed away, is—to understate it—somewhat wide of the mark. Britain has very big trade commitments in Hindustan, Hindustani merchants a very big market to secure or lose in the British Commonwealth, and that is the sole and only reason why Hindustan has elected to stay in our Commonwealth. There is not, in fact, any bond of feeling or principle: and no amount of fair words will create what does not exist. In point of feeling, there is, by the accounts of our own people (whom I would rather believe), very great feeling against us in upper-class Hindustan—for we have broken open the sealed troll-paradise of Hindustan, and have not given them Pakistan.

There is no need to resent the fact of this dislike, but fact it is, and we must reckon with it, and not put our faith in the sons of Hind, except with full sense and wariness. Still with us are the Indian merchants who put sand in sugar, and dirt in wheat and rice, and arrange to fetch rice from South America to alleviate the Bengal famine and make great capital out of the gesture but in the issue neglect to send the promised bags in which to fetch it off: thus gaining both the kudos of philanthropy with the practical advantages of cornering the rice supplies and selling dear to the starving.

We must also keep our eyes on another issue. The Islamic religion is a living torch, long a brother to Christianity, and able to adjust to a modern world. Hinduism cannot do this. Hindu India can only survive if she shuts herself up from the world. This religion of seedy cows, all-licensed bulls, images, temples and taboos, this ethic of child-marriage, widow-burning, holy murder by strangling, pollution and ritual purification, will finally collapse in spite of the powerful junta of reactionaries. For not even the reactionaries believe in this religion: they believe in a secure position for themselves at the top of a securely stratified social order. There will be a quest for a new ethic and a new authority, something that will give good places at the top and fit in with a modern world. The candidate is already in the field, sowing seed and making ready. 'This candidate is the creed of Communism.

I do not know how we shall like a Communist member of

WHITHER COMMONWEALTH?

the Commonwealth. It may strike us then at last that "tolerance" and inertia can go too far. At the moment Hindustan is in the Commonwealth for purely mercenary reasons. There is not a single moral bond. We believe the Commonwealth is really bound together by things of the spirit: loyalties, brotherly consideration, democratic practice, mutual aid and protection, shared resources, co-operation, equalities, aims, faith—a mighty heritage of ideas. Hindustan, however much she may use our words, does not aim at these things and has never given any sign of doing so.

People are known by their deeds and practices.

In Pakistan, things are otherwise. In this north-western Muslim India, we have a people who, upon the whole, really liked us, whom we greatly liked, with whom we felt instinctively at home, who provided us with the steadiest and most loyal of Indian troops during the last war, and who genuinely wished to remain in the Commonwealth. What is more, they had real grounds of sympathy—to wit, a brotherhood religion, a religion and ethical values akin to the Christian, a natural practice of democracy, courage to rule and fight, a sense of the obligation of hospitality, a love of freedom, a dislike of lies and falseness, and, along with much corruption, a sense of right and wrong. Moreover, this people has behind them the sympathy of that immense and strategically placed bloc, Islam of the Middle East.

This was a chance of real friendship: and we have largely thrown it away. Here also is bitterness against us—a new bitterness, that was not there before: and a just one. Pakistan feels that we have let her down. We cleared out with ill-considered haste, when we could have remained practically *en masse*, at their invitation, and possibly doing more good than ever before, being no longer "masters". I know many of us, Indian and British, had this in mind: but no lead was given, no arrangements were attempted, the policy was plain scuttle. Yet the Muslims had openly said they wanted us to stay, to continue administration, and to keep the peace.

We must think, too, for what object we fought the last war. We fought it to conquer totalitarianism, the un-free form of society. To-day we still have totalitarianism, the un-free

INIQUITY OF SPLITTING THE PUNJAB

society, to conquer : it flourishes in Russia. Russia is actively engaged in laying the foundations of a Communist State in Hindustan. Totalitarianism, or Communism, can be grafted very well from bosses above on to the stratified, submissive, helplessly un-free Indian social order. But in Pakistan, Communism meets with small response. In the Punjab, it meets with none. Islam, like Christianity, is essentially incompatible with Communism. The Punjab, remember, is the key to India : who enlists that people and that region, has the key to the continent. Do we not want, then, a strong, thriving, well-equipped, anti-communist Pakistan ? A glance at the map tells us what the strategic value of Pakistan's position is. Surely we want that people, in that position, for our friend ?

But we did not secure Pakistan a fair deal over the money and Army resources lodged over the frontier, with the capital city of Delhi, in Hindu hands. We arranged, by splitting the Punjab, *to leave the canal headwaters in the hands of a hostile Power*, and by the same act we ensured the mutual murder, instead of the collaboration, of Muslims and Sikhs. Had we federated the Sikhs (who are not Hindus, and have much in common with Muslims) with Pakistan, at an early stage, leaving them on their lands, there would have been no Sikh atrocities, and the Sikhs would have been liberally treated and left to virtual independence. But we gave ear to the Hindu-worked stalking-horses of Jatistan and Sikhistan. We have all along persisted in overlooking Pakistan and in courting Hindustan. Even now we are not coming down on the side of right and justice in the Kashmir question. Indeed, but for the Radcliffe Award—but for us—there would have been no Kashmir question. In Eastern Punjab, Kapurthala (a small Sikh State) had a Muslim majority : the regions of Jullundur and Ambala had bare Hindu majorities : Gurdaspur had 51 per cent solid Muslim majority, against 49 per cent mixed others. If justice had been done on this majority by Sir C. Radcliffe, Hindustan would have had no land contact whatever with Kashmir or Jammu. I think we can, therefore, fairly blame ourselves for the massacres and for the Kashmir war. Yet, not content with having so much damaged the future of Pakistan, we throw our chance of friendship with her away again when we choose the immediate apparent

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advantages of trade with an unfriendly country full of established mills and factories, above the helping further to set up a land which, wonderfully developed as it is, is still only at its beginning, a land of promise. For Pakistan can, for some generations to come, absorb the best we can send of engineers and practical administrators, upon suitably secured terms of service : and there are immense works to be done, in irrigation, in farming newly-opened areas, and immense crops to be raised, of wheat, sugar-cane, cattle, cotton, and men. If we go singly, we shall not achieve much, and shall lapse into being adventurers : but if we go as part of a policy, upon terms diplomatically secured, there is a sure future for Pakistan, and for us in them. We are throwing away a great granary and garden, raising two yields a year : we are throwing away unborn generations of one of the finest races on earth, men who, though now fierce and backward, are capable of a great future : men who as soldiers and farmers stood firm and loyal throughout the war and—what is more—throughout Partition : men who look west as well as east, by the nature of their blood and religion : men and women of our own North European stock, whom we should be proud of in the Commonwealth three generations from now—men and women who have it in them to be a security for the future. None of this can be said for Hindustan, except in respect of the East Punjabis and the Rajputs and the Gurkhas. Also, we are, in throwing them away, throwing away the real hope of Hindustan : for they of the north-west have remained European enough to westernize easily, but have gone Indian enough, in a thousand years, to be of India ; and the only men who can wean Hindustan of her very repulsive and degrading system and practices will have to be some sort of Indians. I do not think Hindustan can continue in her deplorable ways : such ways contain their own doom, a self-destruction of corruption. In the final resort, you can only beat a bad religion, or a lack of religion, with a good religion. Islam converts with persuasion and the sword : Christianity with persuasion. There is no reason why the two should not co-operate : but surely the greatest influence to release Hindustan from her age-long superstition and collapse would be the presence of a great body of go-ahead and decent-thinking Indians sitting solid in the north-west.

A PROPER POLICY ADVOCATED

Let us make no mistake, by initiating and maintaining a policy which underwrites the stabilization of Pakistan, we ensure a field of peace. We ensure that Afghanistan will think twice before irresponsibly meddling ; we ensure that the U.S.S.R. will think twice before putting Afghanistan—or Hindustan—to cat's-paw work : for let us be clear, the policy and aims of the U.S.S.R. in Asia, and especially in the areas north-west of India, are simply the continuation of the policy and aims of former Russia. Further, and most important, by helping to stabilize Pakistan, we shall prevent Hindustan from imagining she can easily encircle and overwhelm the West Punjab ; and by the same stroke, we shall be preserving two of the most valuable peoples in Hindustan, just across the present frontier—the noble Rajput Hindus, who are actually the soldier and captain grade of the agriculture Jat tribe, and that energetic and capable brotherhood, the Sikhs, who are chiefly Jats. If Hindustan is allowed to invade and engulf the West Punjab and Pakistan, it is these two orders, the Rajputs and the Sikhs together with all the persuasions of the Jat tribe and its vast kin, who will be her men of war : they alone will be wrecked and decimated : and those peoples are the flower of India. Inevitably, one day, like the English and the Scots, they will settle down at peace with their blood brothers in Muslim Pakistan. It is those people and no other who are capable of fusing East and West for Hindustan—the Punjabis, the Sikhs and Rajputs and their kind, whichever side of the border they may be and whatever their present condition and creed. It is those people who will one day take their rightful place beside their Western kinsmen, the North-west Europeans. They are, in fact, the hope and bridge into the future for all India.

Let us undertake and maintain the policy that will preserve them for that end.

Such development will, in the nature of reality, occur with us, or without us. It would be better for us if it occurred with our help. It is worth every effort to further the stability and prosperity of Pakistan, for this also spells the real good of Hindustan. It is worth a settled policy.

A last word upon the Punjab. It has been the happiest and most prosperous of Indian Provinces. This does not rest

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upon the sole fact of our racial affinity with its people, greatly as that tells. The record of the Punjab rests upon the foundations laid in that Province by two of the greatest Englishmen, the brothers John and Henry Lawrence. These men in exceptional degree won the confidence of the people of the Punjab, and that was not by chance. They were first and foremost God-fearing and Christian men; their private lives were as clean and staunch as their untiring public service, and they drew their strength of spirit from the practice of prayer. They selected a school of famous administrators, and their first requirement of their henchmen was, that they should be Christian men of high honour, energetic and no fools. The people of the Punjab recognized the character of these men and the character of the work they did, which was uncompromising Christian practice and conduct, in matters both public and private. This record has not its like or equal, and it is a demonstration of Christian politics in action.

We have been reaping the reward of this noble work for a hundred years: this band of men has given us a lasting heritage in the Punjab. In this day of expediency, of appeasement, of muddle, of the pursuit of the material and disregard of the spiritual, of knowledge of science and ignorance of God, it is as well to take stock of the work those men consciously wrought, and of its abiding worth—to learn from them, and return to their way: for on every hand we lack their result, and want it.

If we act in their spirit and power, and preserve the heritage they have left us in the goodwill of North-western India, both east and west of the present boundary, we shall be laying up for the future friends worth having, and members of our Commonwealth worth their welcome.

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